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Fort Western



Fort Western, Augusta, Maine, Built in 1754

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH MADE IN 1922

Fort Western on the Kennebec

THE STORY OF ITS CONSTRUCTION
IN 1754 AND WHAT HAS
HAPPENED THERE

By George Francis Dow

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE GANNETT PUBLISHING COMPANY
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THE

NEW

The Early Settlements on the Kennebec River

THE head of navigation on the Kennebec river is at Augusta, formerly Cushnoc, an Indian name meaning "the place of the pines". Probably the first Englishmen to visit this spot were men who arrived in 1607 to plant a colony at the mouth of the river, at that time called the Sagadahoc. Capt. George Popham was in command of the company and a fort and other buildings were built at Small Point, near the mouth of the river, where the winter was spent during which time a small vessel was built. The next year, in the late fall, the settlement was abandoned and the company returned to England. The "Relation" of what occurred at the Popham settlement preserves the fact that Capt. Raleigh Gilbert, with nineteen men, on Sept. 23, 1607, sailed up the river Sagadahoc (the Kennebec) and after two and a half days reached the head of navigation, the small falls at what is now Augusta. The expedition passed the falls and went into camp about a league farther up the river where some Indians speaking in

broken English hailed them from the opposite bank. The next morning, Saturday, Sept. 26, 1607, four Indians appeared, one of whom announced himself as "Sebanoa, Lord of the river of Sagadahock" and asked for what purpose the expedition had come to their country. Here, most unfortunately, the "Relation" ends, the remaining pages of the original manuscript having been lost.

Long before the coming of the white man, the river had been not only a center for several tribes of Indians but also a highway for communication between the north and the sea coast, by which inter-tribal barter was carried on and later conducted with fishermen who frequented the coast at an early period. The Pilgrims at Plymouth needing supplies, in May 1622, sent Edward Winslow and others in a boat to the eastward in search of the fishing vessels that frequented the waters near the island of Monhegan. They found "about thirty sail of ships" at Damariscove Island and while there learned of a trade in valuable

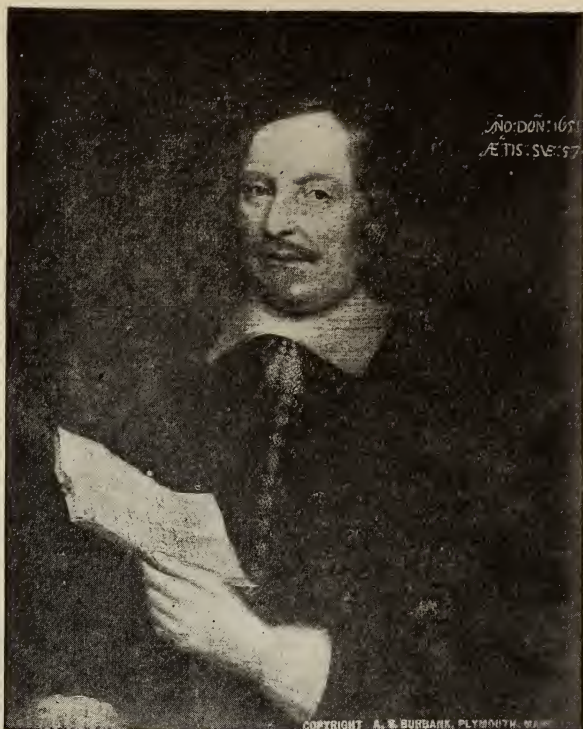
furs. At that time the Pilgrims had nothing to barter with the Indians and it was not until after the harvest of 1625, when they had a surplus of Indian corn, that they embarked on this venture in trade. Governor Bradford in his *History of Plymouth Plantation*, relates the story in the following words:—

“After harvest this year, they sende out a boats load of corne 40 or 50 leagues to ye eastward, up a river called Kenibeck; it being one of those 2 shalops which their carpenter had built them ye year before; for bigger vessell had they none. They had laid a little deck over her midships to keepe ye corne drie, but ye men were faine to stand it out all weathers without shelter; and yt time of ye year begins to growe tempestious. But God preserved them, and gave them good success, for they brought home 700 li. of beaver, besides some other furs, having litle or nothing else but this corne, which them selves had raised out of ye earth. This viage was made by Mr. Winslow & some of ye old stand-ards, for seamen they had none.”

At that time the Pilgrims were deeply in debt to the Company of the Merchant Adventurers in London and the successful trading voyage to the Kennebec river seems to have suggested to Governor Bradford a plan by which this indebtedness might be discharged. So Mr. Allerton was sent to England in 1627 with an order “to procure a patente for a fitt trading place in ye river

Kenebeck; for being emulated both by the planters at Pascataway & other places to ye eastward of them, and also by ye fishing vessels, which used to draw much profite from ye Indians of those parts, they threatened to procure a grante, and shutte them out from thence.” Allerton returned to Plymouth in the spring of 1628 bringing with him “a reasonable supply of goods for ye plantation and also a patente for Kenebeck, but it was so strait and ill bounded, as they were fane to renew & enlarge it the next year.”

The Kennebec patent describes the bounds of the grant made at that time as follows:—“all that tract of land . . . which lyeth within, or between, and extendeth itself from ye utmost limit of Cobiseconte, which adjoineth ye river Kennebeck, towards the western Ocean, and a place, ye falls of Nequamkick and ye space of fifteen English miles on each side of said river, and all ye said river Kennebeck that lyeth within the said limits”, and authority was given to seize any persons or ships that thereafter should attempt to inhabit or trade with the Indians within the limits of the grant. The patent included about 1,500,000 acres of land. The Cobiseconte—meaning “the sturgeon stream place”—a small river still known by that name, enters the Kennebec about six miles below Augusta, and the “falls of the Nequamkick,” according to a deposition made in 1763 by William Lithgow, were the rapids existing in



Edward Winslow

GOVERNOR AT PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

HE WAS IN THE PILGRIM SHALLOP THAT CAME TO THE KENNEBEC IN 1625

the Kennebec about six miles below the Taconic falls at what is now Waterville.

Governor Bradford records that "having procured a patente for Kenebeck, thay now erected a house up above in ye river in ye most convenientest place for trade, as they conceived, and furnished the same with commodities for yt end, both winter and sommer, not only with corne, but also with such other commodities as ye fisherman had traded

with them, as coats, shirts, ruggs, & blankets, biskett, pease, prunes, &c.; and what they could not have out of England, they bought of the fishing ships, and so carried on their bussines as well as they could."

This "convenientest place" was at Cushnoc or Koussinoc, now Augusta, and the trading house was built on the steep easterly bank of the river where Fort Western was erected in 1754. Undoubtedly it was a log structure of some sort and pro-

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bably it was surrounded by a palisade. Capt. Joseph Bean, who was taken captive by the Indians in 1692, relates that the remains of the old trading post were then visible among the new growth of trees. This was sixty-four years after it was built.

About the time that the trading post was established, the Dutch at New Amsterdam began trading at Plymouth, supplying sugar, linen cloth and coarser stuffs; but what turned out to be of greatest value was a considerable supply of wampum which the Dutch were making for the Indian trade on the Hudson and Connecticut rivers.

Wampum, as described by Roger Williams, was of two kinds, "which the Indians make of the stem or stock of the periwinkle after all the shell is broken off. Of this kind, six of the small beads, which they make with holes to string upon their bracelet, are common with the English for a penny. The other kind is black, inclined to a blue shade, which is made of the shell of the *hensquahoc* [now known as the *henclam* or *quahaug*] and of this description three are equal to an English penny. One fathom of this stringed money is worth five shillings." The Narragansetts and Pequots, both powerful tribes, originally manufactured most of this money and grew rich by it, but soon the thrifty Dutch established factories where it was made in such quantities that the market was

broken and the value of wampum rapidly decreased.

Bradford relates that at first the wampum "stuck and it was two years before they could put of this small quantity, till ye inland people knew of it; and afterwards they could scarce ever gett enough for them, for many years together." It was this wampum that gave the Pilgrims such advantage in competing with the fishermen and other traders that soon they practically controlled the fur trade on the Kennebec river. The commodities chiefly used by the Indians were trading cloth—a coarse woollen cloth—bread, peas, trinkets, etc. Between 1631 and 1636 the Pilgrims shipped to England 12,150 pounds of beaver and 1156 pounds of otter. The coat beaver was sold at twenty shillings per pound and it was estimated by Bradford that the shipments of beaver amounted to a value of about £10,000, the otter skins paying all the charges. It was this fur trade on the Kennebec river that relieved the Pilgrims from their financial difficulties and extricated them from the clutches of the Merchant Adventurers of London.

Beaver skins were then sold at prices varying from sixteen to twenty-four shillings per pound and it is interesting to note by way of comparison the scale of prices of other commodities in New England about that time. In 1633, the General Court fixed the price of corn at six shillings per bushel. Wood quotes

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four eggs or a quart of milk at a penny, butter at six pence, and Cheshire cheese at five pence per pound. In the year 1633, prices at Piscataqua in New Hampshire, were as follows: 10½ gallons vinegar cost 2½ pounds of beaver; half a barrel of butter was worth one pound and fourteen ounces of beaver; two pairs of shoes and two axes were exchanged for one pound of beaver; seven gallons of aqua vitae was the value of two otters and four mushquash skins; and fourteen fathoms of wampum were exchanged for fifteen and three-quarters pounds of beaver.

In 1634, John Howland and John Alden were in charge of the trading post at Cushnoc. Howland was the "lustie yonge man" who was washed overboard from the "Mayflower" during a storm but fortunately clutching a top-sail halliard at last was safely hauled aboard again. He became an Assistant and a leading man in the Colony and when he died in 1672 was "the last man that was left of those that came over in the ship called the May Flower." John Alden was a cooper who had been hired to come over. He, too, became an Assistant and prominent man and has been immortalized by Longfellow in the "Courtship of Miles Standish." These men were at the trading post in the early spring of 1634 when a small vessel commanding by one Hocking, came sailing up the river with the intention of trading with the Indians, clearly in violation of the rights of the

Colony. Howland "forbade him from going up" and told him that he was infringing upon the rights of the company, but Hocking persisted and sailed past the post and anchored with the aim to intercept the Indian trade as it came down stream. Howland with three companions went out in a boat and told Hocking that they would be forced to remove him and advised him to go away quietly. This was received with "foule speeches" and Howland was told to do his worst and he, after a consultation, instructed two of his men to go in a small canoe and cut the cable so that the vessel would drift down stream with the tide. This was done, but just as the canoe sheered away Hocking shot and instantly killed one of the men in the canoe, Moses Talbott by name, whose companion "that loved him well", being on board the Pilgrim vessel anchored nearby, at once seized a musket and shot Hocking "who fell downe dead and never speake word." Governor Bradford records that "the bruite of this was quickly carried all aboute and in ye worst manner," so that finally a council was held at Boston and after long discussion "the matter tooke happy ending without any further trouble."

By 1638, the Plymouth Colony had become more prosperous because of success in raising corn and cattle that were sold usually at high prices and in consequence trading in furs began to be neglected and the trading company finally released its

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rights to the Colony after which the trading privilege at Cushnoc was leased from time to time to associations. In 1648, the Indian chief Natahanada deeded to Gov. William Bradford and his associates, land on both sides of the river from "Cushenocke to Wesserunskik." In 1654, Lieut. Thomas Southworth was living at Cushnoc in charge of the trading post and probably had been therefor several years. Hewas a son-in-law of Governor Bradford, having come to New England about 1623 with his widowed mother.

In 1661, the Colony sold the patent to John Winslow and three others for £400 and from that time on these owners and their associates were known as "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase." The trade with the Indians seems to have been neglected by these proprietors and to have drifted into other hands, in fact, for nearly ninety years the title lay practically dormant largely because of the unsettled relations existing between the English and the Indians who, during that period, were dominated to a greater or less extent by French influences in Canada.

In 1717, Sabastian Rasle, the French priest living with the Indians at Norridgewock, notified the Massachusetts Governor that any attempt to occupy the lands beyond the Kennebec would lead to war. Seven years later Captain Harmon arrived in Boston bringing with him

the scalp of "Fryer" Rasle and twenty-seven scalps of his Indian followers, the result of a raid on the village at Norridgewock. Judge Sewall records in his diary that there was great shouting and triumph. "The Lord help us to rejoice with trembling" he continues.

Fort Richmond, at the head of Swan Island, was built by the Province of Massachusetts in 1723 as a check upon the Indians and a garrison was kept there until Fort Halifax was built farther up the river in 1754. In 1732, Governor Belcher while in conference with the Indians at George's river, informed them that a missionary was to be sent to them and to be located at Cushnoc where a church and town were to be built, but nothing came of the intended plan. In 1752, a truck house was built at Fort Richmond to encourage trade with the Indians and William Lithgow was appointed "truck master". Two years later he completed the construction of Fort Halifax at what is now Winslow and then remained there, in command, for a number of years. Meanwhile the French fortress at Louisbourg, in Cape Breton, had been captured by New England men and then, in 1748, restored to the French by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Between 1675 and 1760 there were six Indian wars during which there were actually thirty-five years of frequent attack and constant border warfare.

The Kennebec Purchase and the Building of the Forts in 1754

IN the year of 1749 some of the heirs of the original proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase began to discover an interest in their title to the lands on the Kennebec which were being settled here and there by squatters. It was about this time that Samuel Goodwin of Charlestown, who had received from his father a twenty-fourth part of the grant, made a search for the original Patent. It had been hidden by an "ancient woman who hoped to make some advantage to herself by the possession" and after a long search it was traced and at last delivered to the new proprietors upon an order of General Court.

A meeting of some of the heirs of the original proprietors was held August 17, 1749 at the Royal Exchange Coffee House in Boston, and the company of "The Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase from the late Colony of New Plymouth" was organized and at later meetings it was voted to survey the grant, lay out townships on either side of the river and offer inducements to new settlers. Those active in the organization of the proprietors were: Edward Winslow, Robert Temple,

Henry Laughton, Jacob Wendall, Thomas Valentine, John Bonner, Samuel Goodwin, John Fox and Joseph Gooch. Samuel Goodwin served as clerk and was active in the affairs of the proprietors spending much of his time on the Kennebec. In 1752, the proprietors caused to be erected at Frankfort, across the river from Fort Richmond, a "defensible house" which afterwards was named Fort Shirley in compliment to Governor William Shirley. It consisted of two block houses about twenty-four feet square, in which cannon were placed, and a shed about forty feet long with a lean-to roof. The whole was surrounded by picket work. Nine years later the easternmost of these block houses was made over into a jail and nearby was built "within the parade ground of Fort Shirley", a three-story hip-roofed house, forty-five feet long and forty-four feet wide, to be used as a court house and tavern. This building is yet standing, in what is now the town of Dresden, and is in excellent condition. Its walls were originally covered with pine shingles split from the log and shaved by hand, and the



William Shirley

GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS

FROM A PORTRAIT PAINTED IN 1750 BY T. HUDSON

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original plank partitions, lapped at the joints and never painted, may yet be seen. The old court house is but a short distance from the bank of the Kennebec in the midst of rolling farming lands and nothing now suggests the days of the roving Indian. The passing trains on the opposite bank of the river alone disturb the quiet of the peaceful countryside.

On March 28, 1754, Governor Shirley addressed the Council and House of Representatives in the old State House in Boston and informed them that early in February he had received a letter from Captain Lithgow, in command at Fort Richmond, stating that the French from Canada in considerable number had settled along the Chaudiere river, near the carrying place used in the portage to the Kennebec river, and that a fort was being constructed at that point. Moreover, another letter brought news that the Norridgewock and other Indians, to the number of sixty men, had appeared at Fort Richmond and shown a "Haughty Insolent Behaviour," repeatedly making threats that "as soon as the Rivers should be free from ice, they would Commit Hostilities against the English." The French priest who lived as a missionary among the Indians on the Kennebec also proposed to build "a chapel and a Dwelling House for himself upon that River, about three or four Miles above Cushanac". The Governor stated that he had

commissioned Capt. John North, in command at Pemaquid, to proceed at once with an armed guard to the carrying place to ascertain the truth of the report. He also urged the "building of a Strong Fort near the head of the River Kennebeck, above the settlements of the Norridgewalk Indians", in order to resist encroachments and hold the Indians in due dependence. He further recommended that repairs be made at Fort Richmond which needed to be "Shingled and Clapboarded."

The General Court at once declared its readiness "to do everything that could be expected" and requested the Governor to organize an expedition of five hundred men, afterwards increased to eight hundred, and proceed to the Kennebec to destroy the encroaching settlements and also to construct a fort about one hundred and twenty feet square at a location as far up the river above Fort Richmond as he should judge expedient and cause the garrison, artillery and stores at the latter fort to be removed to the new fort. This action was taken by the General Court on April 10th, 1754. Seven days previously the Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase had held a meeting and unanimously adopted the following vote:—

"VOTED: That in case the General Court of the province of the Massachusetts Bay shall at this their present session come to a Determination to build a Fort at Te-

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conett upon Kennebec River, that then this proprietor will (if desired by the Government) at the time of their building the Fort above mentioned, build or cause to be built at or near Cushnock, as the Governor shall order, a House of Hewen Timber not less than ten Inches thick, one hundred feet long and thirty-two feet wide and sixteen feet high for the Reception of the said provisions Stores, with Conveniences for Lodging of the Soldiers who may be placed there by the Government, and will picquet in the same at Thirty feet Distance from every part of the said House, & build a Block House of Twenty four feet Square at two of the opposite angles agreeable to a plan ready to be exhibited when it shall be called for; the Government protecting the People while employed in building the said House, and the Committee viz. Robert Temple Esq., Dr. Sylvester Gardiner, Mr. James Bowdoin, Mr. William Bowdoin and Mr. Benjamin Hallowell are hereby desired to take care that the fore-mentioned House be built and picqueted in, & the Block-houses built agreeable to this Vote at the charge of this propi-ettee."

This clearly shows that a well defined plan, probably originating with the Proprietors, was already before the Governor and this more fully appeared at an adjourned meeting held April 17th when the following appears entered upon their records, viz.:—

"Whereas this Propi-ettee hath this Day received a Letter from his Excellency William Shirley Esq bearing date the Sixteenth of this Instant April relating to our building a Fort upon Kennebeck River at or near Cushnock which requires some alteration in the Vote of this propriety passed the 3d of this Instant April relating to this propriety's building a Fort at or near Cushnock—

"Therefore Voted unanimously that the said Vote passed the said 3d April be reconsidered.

"Voted unanimously that the forementioned Letter from Gov. Shirley be recorded, which is as follows—

"Boston, April 16, 1754.

"Gentlemen,

"The Great and General Assembly of this province having in their present session by their Message to me, desired that I would order 'a New Fort to be Erected of about one hundred & Twenty feet Square, as far up the River Kennebeck above Richmond Fort as I shall think fitt, and whereas the placing of such Fort upon this occasion near Taconett Falls would contribute more to the Defence of the said River & protection of the Settlements which are or shall hereafter be made upon it, than Erecting a Fort at or near Cushenac; but would be attended with this inconvenience, that the Depth of Water in said River will not admit provisions and stores to be transported in a

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sloop higher than Cushenac; so that it is necessary in Case a Fort be erected at Taconett Falls, that a strong defensible magazine should be built at Cushenac for the Reception of the Governments Stores & provisions in their Carriage to said Fort; I think it proper to acquaint you that in case you shall forthwith at the Expense of your propertee cause to be built at or near Cushenac upon the said river, as I shall order an House of Hewen Timber not less than ten inches thick, one hundred feet long & thirty two feet wide, and Sixteen feet high, for the Reception of the province stores & the conveniences for Lodging the Soldiers who may be placed there by the Government; and will picquet in the same at thirty feet Distance from every part of the said House; and build a Block house of Twenty four feet Square at two of the opposite Angles agreeable to a plan exhibited by you for that purpose, and furnish the same with four Cannon carrying Ball of four pounds, I will cause the Workmen who shall be employed in building the said House to be protected in their work untill the same shall be finished; and will give orders as soon as may be for erecting a New Fort at the Charge of the Government of the Dimensions proposed by the General Assembly in their aforesaid Message to me, above Taconett Falls upon the aforesaid River, for the protection of the Settlements made, or which may hereafter be made upon the same, & in

the adjacent Country; and use my best Endeavours to cause the same, to be finished with the utmost Expedition.

I am Gentlemen

Your Friend and Servant

W. SHIRLEY.

“To the proprietors of the Kennebeck Purchase from the late Colony of New Plymouth”

In consequence of Governor Shirley's letter, the Proprietors adopted the following vote:—

“Voted—Whereas the Great & General Assembly of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay have in their present session by their Message to his Excell'y William Shirley Esq Governor of the said Province desired him to order a New Fort to be Erected of about one hundred & Twenty feet Square as far up the River Kennebeck, above Richmond Fort as he shall think fit; & his said Excellency has signified to us the proprietors, that in case we will forthwith at our Expence cause to be built at or near a place call'd Cushanac upon said River; as he shall order, an House of Hewen Timber not less than ten inches thick, one hundred feet long, thirty two feet wide, & sixteen feet high, for the Reception of the said Province's stores, with conveniences for Lodging the Soldiers who may be placed there by the Government and will picquet in the same at thirty feet distance from every part of the said House, and build a Block-House of Twenty four feet

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square at two of the opposite angles, and a Centry Box at each of the other two angles of Twelve feet square, agreeable to a plan exhibited by us to his said Excellency for that purpose, & furnish the same with four Cannon carrying Ball four pounds, his said Excellency haveing undertaken to protect the Workmen who shall be employed in building the said House untill the same shall be finished; He the said Governor will as soon as may be give orders for Erecting a New Fort at the Charge of the Government of the Dimensions proposed by the General Assembly in their aforesaid Message to him, above Taconett Falls upon the aforesaid River, for the protection of the Settlements made, or which may hereafter be made upon the same, and in the adjacent Country, and use his best Endeavours to cause the Fort to be finished with the utmost Expedition.

“Now it is unanimously Voted — That in Consideration of the aforesaid Assurance given to this proprietee by his said Excellency we the said proprietee will cause forthwith to be built a House of Hewen Timber not less than ten inches thick, one hundred feet long, and thirty two feet wide, & sixteen feet high, and will picquet in the same at thirty feet distance from every part of the same House and will also build a Block-House of twenty four feet square at two of the opposite angles, and a Centry Box of twelve feet square at each of the other two

angles agreeable to the beforementioned plan; and the Committee vizt. Thomas Hancock Esq, Dr. Silvester Gardiner, Mr. James Bowdoin, Mr. William Bowdoin, Mr. Benjamin Hallowell are hereby desired to take care that the aforementioned House be built & picquetted in & the Block houses & Centry Boxes be built agreeable to this vote, at the Charge of this proprietee.

“Present: Mr. James Bowdoin, Mr. Balthezar Bayard, Mr. William Taylor, Mr. Jona Reed, Mr. Samuel Goodwin, Mr. Gershom Flagg, Charles Apthorp Esq, Thomas Hancock Esq, Mr. James Pitts, Maj. Nathaniel Thwing, Mr. Benjamin Hallowell, Dr. Silvester Gardiner, William Bowdoin Moderator, David Jeffries prop: Clerk.”

Immediately after the action of the General Court on April 10th, the Governor directed Capt. Joseph Bane of York to proceed to the Kennebec with instructions to go to the carrying place at the Chaudiere river, with Bartholomew, the Indian interpreter and one other man, and ascertain the truth of the report as to the new French fort. He was also instructed to “take special Notice of the Land lying on Kennebeck River between Cooshnuck & Taconick falls on both sides of the River & what the Soil is & what Growth of Timber there is upon it particularly near Taconit falls; and you must also observe the falls of the River between those Places & how far it is practicable & in what manner

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as well as in what Season of the year you may judge best to convey Provisions & other Goods from Cooshnuck to Taconick."

On the 25th of April, at the request of the Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase, the Governor ordered Capt. John North to send "a sufficient number of Men well armed & appointed in Whale Boats up the Kennebeck River under the Command & Direction of Capt. Samuel Goodwin, as far as Taconeck Falls, to view the Land thereabouts, & particularly to observe what Timber may be there suitable for the Building a Fort."

Governor Shirley with members of his Council and the forces raised for the eastern expedition under command of Col. John Winslow, embarked from Boston on June 21st, for Falmouth, now Portland, where he held a conference with Penobscot and Norridgewock Indians and informed them of his intention to build a fort at Taconic. They at first objected but at length consented and signed a treaty. Three days later, on July 6th, the Governor entered into an agreement with Capt. Isaac Ilsley of Falmouth, carpenter, to proceed at once with twelve other carpenters, "whom he hath engaged for that purpose, to Kennebec River in a schooner . . . to be employed in helping to build a fort, to be erected at or near Taconnet Falls." Ilsley's bill for eighty-two days labor each for himself and twelve men amounted to £1660.10.0.

The troops and workmen at once sailed for the Kennebec and on August 30th were followed by the Governor and his staff in the "Castle pinnace", a small vessel from Castle William in Boston harbor. The story of what occurred during the exploring expedition may be found in the *Boston Gazette* for Sept. 8, 1754:—

"On Saturday last, John Shirley, Esq., son of His Excellency, our Governor, arrived here from Falmouth in Casco Bay, by whom we have the following account, viz.,

"That the forces under General Winslow set out from Teconnett with something more than five hundred men and fifteen battoes, on the eighth of August past, but after proceeding two days up the river, the General was taken so ill that he was obliged to return, leaving the command, with the instructions to him, with Col. Preble, who, on the 10th, at nine in the morning, preceded with thirteen battoes, one-half the men on one side, and the other half on the other side of the river, and on Tuesday the thirteenth, arrived at Norridgewalk, which is thirty-one miles above Teconnett, beautifully situated, near 400 acres of clear land on which the grass is generally five or six feet high. Here they found six Indian men, three squaws and several children, who appeared at first surprised to see such a number of men and battoes so far advanced into their country, but after they were told by Col. Preble that they had

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nothing to fear from him, that none of his men should hurt the least thing they had, nor go into their houses, and that Governor Shirley had ordered they should be treated with civility and kindness, they appeared well satisfied and were kind and friendly; and Passequeant, one of their chiefs, presented him with two fine salmon, and some squashes of their own produce, and were all very free in drinking King George's and Governor Shirley's health, and told him he was welcome there. They camped that night half a mile above the town, and the next day, leaving the battoes there with a detachment sufficient to guard them, they proceeded on their march to the great carrying place between Kennebec and the river Chaudiere, where the French were said to be building a fort, and arrived there on the eighteenth, which is thirty-eight miles and three-quarters above Norridgewalk, a few miles below which they met three birch canoes with eight Indians in them, who had lately come over the carrying place, and as they supposed from Canada. The Indians were much surprised on discovering the party, and endeavoured to return up the river with their canoes, but the rapidity of the stream prevented their speedy flight on which they run the canoes on shore, on the opposite side of the river caught one of them up and ran off into the woods, leaving the other two on the spot, and made their escape into the carrying place,

and so returned to Canada, to carry intelligence, as Col. Preble supposed for he tracked them in his march across the said carrying place; the course of which from the head of the Kennebec River is due west, and the distance three miles, three-quarters and twenty-two rods, to a pond about two miles long and one and a half miles broad; beyond that is another carrying place of about one mile, which leads to another pond, that runs into the Chaudiere.

"They returned from the first mentioned pond the same day, and came to Norridgewalk the twenty-first of August, early in the day, where they found Capt. Wright and the detachment under his command all well, and thirty-five Indians, old and young, who, upon the knowledge of Colonel Preble's return, dressed themselves up in their way very fine, by putting on clean shirts and painting and decorating themselves with wampum. They saluted him with a number of guns and three cheers, and then a number of them waited on him at the camp, welcomed him back, and seemed to express a good deal of satisfaction at his return.

"After drinking King George's and Governor Shirley's health, they invited him to their houses, and ten or twelve of their chiefs desired a short conference with him; and after having cleared the house of young men, who diverted themselves, meanwhile, playing ball, etc., told him that he had passed and re-

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passed through their country, they were glad to see him back, and he was heartily welcome; and they had told him, before he went, there was no French settlement at the carrying place, and since he had been there and found it so, hoped he would now look upon them as true men; and that we were now all one brothers; and if their young men should get in liquor and affront any of the English, hoped we should take no notice of it; that they were determined to live in friendship with us; and if the Canada Indians had any design to do any mischief on our frontiers, they would certainly let us know it; and if any disputes arose betwixt the French and us, they were determined for the future to sit still and smoke their pipes.

“The Colonel told them the resolution they had taken would be very pleasing to Governor Shirley, and as long as they kept their faith with us they might depend on being treated as friends and brethren, and be supplied with all the necessaries at Teconnet, which would be much more convenient than at Richmond; all of which they told they liked very well; and were sorry they had no liquor to treat them with, but desired he would see their young men dance and they ours, which they said was a token of friendship, and was accordingly performed.

“Next morning, on the Colonel’s taking his leave of them, they wished him safe to Teconnet, and saluted him with thirty or forty small arms,

as fast as they could load and discharge.

“The army arrived at Teconnet, on Friday, the twenty-third of August, at five o’clock in the afternoon, having been sixteen days on the march. As to the course of the river into the country, it must be deferred until a plan of the same, which has been taken by a skillful surveyor, shall appear. The soil, for the most part, is extremely good and appears to be fertile. There are many beautiful islands in the river, some of which contain near a thousand acres of intervale; but the land is not plentifully supplied with timber.

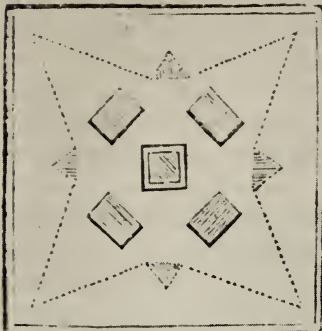
“The navigation to Norridgewalk is considerably difficult by reason of the rapidity of the stream and rippling falls, but tis’ likely will be much easier when the water is higher. There is but one fall above the Teconnet Falls that is necessary to carry the battoes around before we come to Norridgewalk, betwixt which, and the carrying place the navigation is vastly better than below, there being only two falls to carry round, one of which notwithstanding it is a mile in length, there is a plain beaten path; the other is not above thirty or forty rods.”

Governor Shirley returned to Boston on September 9th and his own story of what had taken place since he left Boston on June 21st is found in his speech to the Council and House of Representatives delivered October 18th, 1754, a portion of which follows:—

young man's misfortune, rode directly to the neighbours, who very expeditiously rode and drew him up. He was presently put to bed, and is now perfectly recovered.

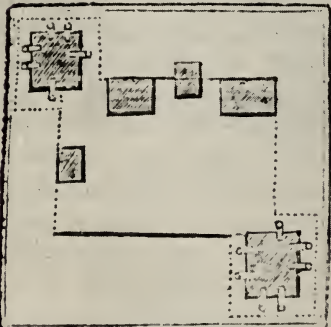
Attended by us,
John Lart, Robert Sherwood,
Wm. Wye, * John Sherwood.

Plan of Fort HALIFAX.



THE above fort was built under the direction of *Wm. Shirley*, governor of *New England*. It is situated on a fork or point of land formed by the meeting of the river *Kennebeck* and *Schoepenaw*, the latter of which empties itself into the former, at the distance of about 3 quarters of a mile from the falls at *Tacomer*.—This spot is 37 miles higher up the river *Kennebeck* than the old fort at *Pakwood*, which old fort is about two miles above *Sagadahoc* island, on the West side of the river, and about the same distance below fort *Frankfort*, built on

Plan of Fort FRANKFORT.



the opposite shore, the distance of which is not less than 24 miles from the entrance of *Kennebeck* bay, and both built by the *Phoenix* company, who have the possession of this northernmost Territory of the province of *Maine* and its bay. So that the whole extent and distance of this new fort from the *Kennebeck's* mouth is about 66 miles, the utmost extent to which it was

advisable or safe to carry a fort up that river, at first, as it is not quite 40 miles from *Pembroke*, and but 31 from *Norridgewick* by water, and 22 by land.

The only known communication which the *Pembiens* have with the river *Kennebeck* and *Norridgewick* Indians inhabiting it, is thro' the river *Schoepenaw*, by means of a carrying place which they cross within half a mile of *Tacomer's* falls; and their most convenient passage from *Pakwood* to *Quebec* is thro' *Kennebec* to the river *Clarendon*.

But as the river *Kennebeck* is not navigable for ships beyond *Cashoonick*, that is, about 43 miles high, and the navigation between that and *Tacomer*, being 18 miles, is, for much the greater part of it, so incumbered with shoals and rocks, and strong currents occasioned by frequent falls, that the transportation of bulky and heavy stores appeared impracticable, till a house of hewn timber, ten inches thick, 100 feet long, 32 wide, and 16 high, for the reception of the provinces stores, with conveniences for lodging soldiers, picketted in at 30 feet distance from every part of the house, with a block house of 23 feet square at two of the opposite angles, mounted with four cannon, was built at *Cashoonick*, which will not only serve to lodge the public stores in, but add to the defence and protection of the river, and greatly encourage settlements upon it: And to make it still more beneficial a road of communication between *Cashoonick* and *Tacomer* has been cleared for wheel carriages, whereby the transportation of stores by land from fort *Western* at the former, to fort *Halifax* at the latter, in the space of one day, will be rendered practicable, and the want of a convenient carriage by water supply'd

Plan of Fort WESTERN, built in 1754.



Fort *Western* is an excellent entertaining 400 men, and being surrounded with a hundred, is sufficient to resist any surprise or assault, which may be made upon it, and to be made more so, either by the use of 7 or 8 small arms. And upon reflecting on the difficulty which the river would have to transport cannon or mortar to land to attack it, there is but one chance of their attempting to do that, and there is no doubt but it will cost all between the expense for which it is built, and the success for which it is built, as it is a very good fort.

The Kennebec Purchase

"In compliance with the request of the late Assembly contain'd in the Message of both Houses to me on the 9th of April last and your own vote passed in the May session following, I caus'd Eight hundred men to be rais'd for the Services therein mention'd, and soon after the rising of this Court, embark'd, in company with them, for Falmouth in Casco Bay, where I had separate Interviews and Conferences with the Norridgewalk & Penobscott Indians; After the former of these was finish'd I caus'd the forces and workmen to proceed to the River Kennebeck for building a Fort there above that at Richmond, with orders for a Detachment of five hundred of the former to march to the Head of that River, and the great Carrying-place between that and the River Chaudiere, and to remove any French Settlements which might be found and took, as much as was possible, the Execution of these several matters under my immediate care and Direction, according to the particular Desire of the Assemble express'd in the before mentioned Message to me . . . The place, which I pitched upon for erecting the new Fort and for my better Information caus'd to be surveyed, together with the Navigation of the River between that & Richmond, as also the lands adjacent, and to have a plan taken of it, before I left Boston, is in a Fork or Point of Land form'd by the Meeting of the Rivers Kennebeck & Sebastoocook, the latter of which

empties itself into the former at the distance of about three quarters of a Mile from the falls at Taconnett.

"This spot, which is thirty-seven Miles higher up the River Kennebeck than the old Fort at Richmond, & the utmost extent to which it was advisable or safe to carry a fort up that River at first, is computed to be not quite fifty miles distant from Penobscott, and, as measured by the Chain & Compass, is not more than thirty-one from Norridgewalk by Water, and twenty-two by land, and is on many accounts the most advantageous one for the situation of a Fort, between that & Richmond.

"The only known Communication, which the Penobscotts have with the River Kennebeck & Norridgewalk Indians inhabiting it, is thro the River Sebastoocook, by means of a Carrying-Place which they cross within ten rods Distance from Taconnett Falls; and their most Commodious Passage from Penobscott to Quebec lies thro Kennebeck to the River Chaudiere; so that a Fort situated here not only cuts off the communication of the Penobscotts with the Norridgewalks, but with Quebec likewise, through their easiest Route to it; and, as it stands at a convenient distance for making a sudden & easy descent upon their Headquarters, it is as strong a Curb upon their Tribe, as it is upon that of the Norridgewalk.

"But as the River Kennebeck is not Navigable for Sloops beyond

Fort Western on the Kennebec

Cushenock, and the Navigation between that and Taconnett, being eighteen miles, is for much the greatest part of it so incumbered with Shoals & Rocks and strong Currents occasioned by frequent falls that the Transportation of Bulkey & Heavy Stores is impracticable; unless in the time of the Freshetts; not only the carrying up a Fort as high as Taconnett, but the supporting it when built, appeared to be attended with insuperable Difficulties, unless a large Defensible Store-house should be built at Cushenoc to lodge the Province Stores in their Passage to Taconnett.

“To remedy this, the proprietors of some lands upon Kennebeck River, commonly called the Plymouth Company, made me an offer, that if I would cause the intended Fort to be erected at Taconnett, they would at their expense built at or near Cushenoc, as I should order, a House of Hewen Timber not less than ten Inches thick, one hundred feet long, thirty-two wide, sixteen high, for the reception of the Province's Stores, with Conveniences for Lodging of the Soldiers who may be placed there by the Government; and would picket it in at thirty Feet distance from every part of the House, and build a Block house of 24 feet Square at two of the opposite Angles to be mounted with four Cannon, agreeable to a Plan ready to be exhibited when it should be called for; the Government to

protect the people while employed in building the said House: which Vote & Plan shall be communicated to you.

“This offer I readily accepted for the Province; and that Company hath built a fortified Store house at Cushenoc according to the said Plan, which will not only serve to lodge the public Stores in, but add to the Defence and Protection of the River, & greatly encourage Settlements upon it: and to make it still more beneficial, I have caus'd a Road of Communication between Cushenoc and Taconnett to be clear'd for Wheel Carriages, whereby the Transportation of Stores by Land from Fort Western at the former to Fort Halifax at the latter, in the space of one day, will be render'd practicable, and the want of a convenient carriage by water supply'd.”

The Governor then described the location and construction of Fort Halifax and gave some account of the expedition up the Kennebec to the carrying place where “no signs of any French Settlement were found.” He stated that the impressed men had all been discharged except one hundred to garrison Fort Halifax and twenty to garrison Fort Western.

The alarming reports of intended Indian attack and of French settlement at the great carrying place having been found to be false, it has been suggested that these reports may have originated in the Kenne-

The Kennebec Purchase

bec Company itself in the hope of inducing the Government to construct a strong fort north of their lands as a protection for settlers. The exact facts must have come to the knowledge of Governor Shirley at an early date and yet he allowed the General Court to continue in its support of the original plan for the building of a fort. It is even possible that he had a personal interest in furthering the welfare of the Company for on Dec. 11, 1754, before Fort Halifax was completed, eight shares in the Company's lands and securities were transferred to Governor Shirley by Doctor Sylvester Gardiner, a proprietor who had received the same day from the Company, a grant of 3200 acres of land located just below the Fort, from which the usual settling conditions requiring the building of a house eighteen by twenty feet in size and the clearing of five acres of land, all within three years time, were shortly after remitted "for great services done this proprietee." The Governor was a practicing lawyer in Boston where most of the proprietors lived and the question has been asked if these eight shares in the stock of the Company may not have been conveyed to the Governor as an attorney's fee? Moreover, Robert Temple, a large proprietor in the Company was a son-in-law of Governor Shirley. Thomas Hutchinson writing only twenty years later in his *History of Massachusetts Bay*, remarks:—"This expedition

which was very expensive; and though it was, in every part of it, the project of the Governor, yet, as it had the appearance of originating in the Assembly, there was no room for complaint."

It will be noted in the Governor's message to the General Court on Oct. 18th, that he states the Kennebec Company had already built its storehouse at Cushnoc. It was garrisoned and was an important post and very necessary to the maintenance of the fort eighteen miles above it. All supplies must be landed at Cushnoc and communication with Boston was slow and irregular especially during the winter season. The deep snows frequently made it impossible to transfer supplies to Fort Halifax and at times the troops stationed there suffered considerable hardship. A letter to the Governor from Capt. Lithgow, dated Jan. 9, 1755, and now preserved in the State Archives at Boston, gives a vivid picture of the conditions prevailing at the Fort at that time.

"May it pleas your Excellency

"The Souldery of Fort Hallifax Is In a most Deplorable Condition for want of Shoes Stockings Beding and Bodyely Cloathing &c—as I have Signified In my Letter of ye 20th Deer and it is with the greatest Conserne that I am obliged farther to Acquainte Your Excellency that we have scarce 30 men In this Fort that are Capable of Cutting or Halling wood for the supply of this Fort and It is with grate

Fort Western on the Kennebec

Difficulty thay Can Supply them Selves with Wood from Day to Day the Snow is so Deep, it is 3 foot at this Place, and haveing no Snow Shoas and our being in a manner naked it Is out of our power ware we In Health to Keep Scouts aBroad or even Send a Guard with those men that Halls Wood neither Can thay Carry their arms with them being hard put to it to wallow through the Snow with their Sled Load of Wood, and its hard Service for those men to Supply them Selves and ye Involleeds with firing which Takes up two intire Barracks, we have now but 4 Weeks allowance of Bread In this Fort, one barrel of Rum and one Do of molasses and god knows how or when we shall be able to gitt any Suplyes from Fort Western on account of ye Snow is so Deep. I Left Fort Halifax ye 4th Instant to See if ye River was passable on ye Ice with one Souldier for Company, and also to try if I Could Collect Som Leather or Shoas for a present Relife, till more shall be Sent, which I have got, and have Employ'd 2 shoamakers to work it up, we Came all the way on the Ice which we found to be very Week between Fort Hallifax and Fort Western on account as I Suppose of ye grate Body of Snow which Lyes on it which hinders its freesing, the Ice there is Sunk with Snow & Water about 2 feet & halfe Deep, ye under Ice was so weak that we Broak throw Sundery Times, and it was with grate Difi-

culty & hazard of our Lives that we got to Fort Western, whare we was Detained by a Storm 2 Days. ye 8th Instant we arived at Richmond Fort, where I thought it my Duty to wright Your Excellency this Letter,—

“I think it was a very bad affair that ye Barricks had not been left In Better order, and that thare had had not been more Suplyes laid up in this Fort whilst the River was open, if it was bad Carrying ye stores then, I aver its ten Times worse now, and I feer will Continue So this Winter, for I Doubt ye River above Fort Western will be hard to freeze, on account of ye Strong Current that Runs there, and as to ye Cutt Rodes being of Service, it would now take 50 men, and Ten yoack of oxen 2 Days to Brack it, and after it was broaken it would Choack up with ye first wind that Blew. Som of the gullys now are Drifted 10 or 15 foot Deep with Snow, that I think will never be of much Service to us In transpoarting our provisions, till Such Times as ye Country Settles and more teemes frequents that Road then what may be allowed for Fort Hallifax, but these dull Complaintes avales us but Little to extracate us out of our present Difficulties it Remains now to think of ye best way by which that garrison can be relived, and I would with Submission offer your Excellency my Humble oppinion upon ye matter, which Is that your Excellency give the Indipendent

The Kennebec Purchase

Company's or other forces that may be raised as Succers for the Defence of this River, orders to provide or Impress Horces or other Cattle with provinder, and Slayes or Chaires, and those Cattle to be employ'd in Halling the Stores and other Suplyes that may soon be Landed In this River (for the Suply of Fort Hallifax) up to Fort Western, farther I belive Cattle will be of no Service, on account of ye Rivers being Daingerous for Cattle to Travel on, as I have already observed, and then a proper Number of Men with Snow Shoes may be employed In carrying up provisions from Western to Fort Hallifax, and after ye Road is beten well, and the Involleeds that may be able to Travel after being shod &c for them to march Down ye River and tarry with ye provisions which will Save a grate Deel of Featigue of Carrying of ye provisions to them, and that thare be good men placed at Fort Hallifax. In their Rooms I should ere now have Dissmised Som worthless Fellows which Does little other Duty then Eates their allowance, Could thay have traveled Home for thay will never Do any Service here or any whers else, this garrison, I think has its full Share of Such Creatures that Resembles men In nothing but ye Humain Shape, but Say Som, Such will Do for Forts where thay have nothing to Do but Eate & Sleep, as it seems to be ye opinion of those that Hiers or Empresses them, or at least they Croud Such Into ye

Service to be maintained at ye publick Expencc to Save themselves the Charge Such men would be to ye Towns they are Sent from, now ye Consiquence of this management will be that this winter it will requier one hundred or 2 good men Constantly carrying provisions from Fort Western to Fort Hallifax for them selves and those that Canot Do their own Duty, as I have just mentioned, which very much Discouriges good men, and Cloges ye Service which In my Humble opinion Requires ye governments perticular Notice, we very much want a Sortment of Suitable Hearbs for the Sick, our Doctor has left us and we have no one here that knows ye use of our meadisons, a grate many of our men has ben sick and Continuees So, but non of them has perfectly Recovreed to their former healths, nor will not I belive this Winter, the men in General Seems to be very Low In Spirets which I Impute to their wadeing So much In the Watter In ye Sumer and Fall which I believe has very much hurt ye Circulation of their Blood and filled it full of gross Humers and what has aded to their misfortune is their being much streightened for want of Room, and Bad Lodgings.

“In ye Spring of ye year must be sent to Fort Western 10 Lodes of English Hay, for the Suply of ye oxen that must hall ye Timber for ye bulding at Fort Hallifax,— other wise we Can not go on with ye Buldings there, I have Employed 3 Car-

Fort Western on the Kennebec

pinters this Winter to prepair Timber for the above Buldings, I have agreed with two of them for £30 per month and one for £20 old Ten'r till ye Last of March, and after that 30' per Day till ye last of May.

"I would again Recomend to your Excellency ye 8 flat Bottomed Botes Carrying 2 Tuns Each, which I mentioned In my Last Letter that they be sent to Fort Western as early as possible ye next Spring, to Carry up our Stores to Fort Halifax, which I am Satisfied must be ye way by which we can be Supply'd at this Fort, I add no farther then we will Do ye best we can to Subsist till we have more Help.

"with Submission I beg Leave to Subscribe my Selfe—

"Your Excellencys most dutiefull obedient Serv't

WILLM LITHGOW

"Richmond Fort Jan'r ye 9th
1755"

Nine days later the Governor received this letter and immediately replied that stores would be dispatched at once. He also wrote that ten days before, supplies of food and clothing had been sent and that horses, cattle and carriages and a guard of men were to be impressed to convey the stores to Fort Western. He also had given orders that flat bottomed boats be built immediately for use at the Fort, each to be armed with four swivel guns. Some of these flat bottomed boats, of two tons displacement, were built at

Brunswick by a Mr. Wood and two were sent down from Boston which could not be used and were withdrawn. Those built at Brunswick "go as well as whale boats, and when loaded draw eighteen inches of water, and will carry twenty-five barrels of pork and bread." In June, 1755, three of these flat boats were in commision at Fort Western supplimented by whale boats brought from Falmouth, and canoes. The difficulty of transporting supplies added greatly to the cost of maintaining the forts and a popular estimate of the time was that "every biscuit sent to Fort Halifax cost the Province a pista-reen,"—a Spanish silver coin of the value of about ten English pence.

Fort Halifax never was completed. The original design was changed and finally abandoned. In 1760, Montresor, an English officer of the Engineers, discribed it as "square—its defence a bad palisade flanked by two block houses, in which there are some guns mounted . . . it is garrisoned by a company of New Englanders and supplied from the settlements below. The tide brings sloops to Fort Western, six leagues below Fort Halifax."

Captain Lithgow remained in command at the Fort and later was stationed there in 1765 as "truck master" in charge of the trade with the Indians. After the fort was dismantled the officers quarters was used as a tavern. There was origin-

The Kennebec Purchase

ally a "sentry walk" on the ridge pole of the large house. The windows were supplied with glass of small size and the barracks had no glass windows. All that now remains of this Fort is one of the block houses standing on the bank of the river and only a few yards from the tracks of the Maine Central railroad, its present owner.

NOTE: "We are inform'd, His Excellency at his late Visit to *Taconnet* and *Cushnoc*, nam'd the Fort lately erected at the former of those Places, Fort HALIFAX, and that of the latter, Fort WESTERN; and that the Ceremony of naming the former was perform'd by his Excellency's laying the Corner-Stone, the Garrison being drawn up under arms; after which he drank Success to Fort Halifax; which was seconded by a general discharge of the Cannon there.

"The Inscription upon the Stone laid by His Excellency is as follows:

Quod felix sustumq: sit
PROVINCAE MASSACHU-
SETTENSIS

Hunc lapidem posuit
GULIELMUS SHIRLEY

Gubernator
Sub auspiciis
Nobelissimi

GEORGII MONTAGUE DUNK

Comitis de HALIFAX
PROVINCICIARUM

Quotquot sunt Ditionis
BRITANNICAE

Per AMERICAM Utramque
Praefecti atq: Patroni
Illustrissimi

Die 3 *Septembris*, A. D. 1754"

Boston Gazette, Sept. 24, 1754.

The Building of Fort Western

THE Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase from the late Colony of New Plymouth having voted on April 17, 1754, to build at Cushnoc "an House of Hewen Timber," the committee charged with the duty of having the work done began at once to secure carpenters and supplies. To Gershom Flagg of Boston, one of the proprietors, a housewright and glazier by trade, was intrusted the general oversight of these preparations. On April 23rd he rode to Woburn and Wilmington in search of carpenters to go to the Kennebec and not finding a sufficient number a few days later he went to Concord for the same purpose. On May 8th, fourteen men reported to Flagg at Boston and they were "dieted and lodged" at the expense of the Proprietors until the 15th when preparations were completed and the party set sail for the Kennebec. The food stuffs shipped at that time seem to have been ample. Veal, beef, pork and candles were supplied "for ye passage" with four bushels of corn, two bush-

els of rye, fifteen gallons of vinegar and seven pounds of sugar. A lot "screwed hay", i. e. pressed hay, was taken along for the cattle. Small Point, at the mouth of the river, was reached on the 17th and there three shillings and five and one-half pence were paid for fresh fish.

Thomas Hancock of Boston, a large shareholder in the Company, sold most of the supplies that were shipped to Cushnoc. These included two hogsheads of No. 1 corn; three hogsheads of bread, at $2\frac{1}{4}$ pence per pound; four hundred weight of ship bread, at $2\frac{1}{4}$ pence per pound; ten barrels of pork, "Repackt & Pickled", at $6\frac{1}{4}$ pence per pound; and a barrel of "cyder", at ten shillings and eight pence. Among other items were thirty-two gallons of molasses, at fourteen shillings per gallon; two iron pots, at eighty-seven shillings; a pot hook; bowl and plates. In June, the workmen were supplied with salmon and half a sturgeon and tobacco was allowed them for "extra work". On June 13th, the following hardware

The Building of Fort Western

was charged to the Company's account and shipped to the Kennebec by Captain McFadden:—

200 30d Nails, at 60s.
2000 8d do at 3/8
1009 6d do at 6s.
150 Spikes at £5.
12 Steel Shod Shovels---1.16.0
2 Iron Socket Shovels 18.8
6 Square Spades 2.0.0
2 Iron Spades, wt 63½ lb. 2.2.4
8000 20d Nails at 10/.
6 Pick Axes 1.12.0
1 Coil 3 Inch Rope 6.2.7
1 Cask 4d Nails at 2/8
1 do 10d at 6/8

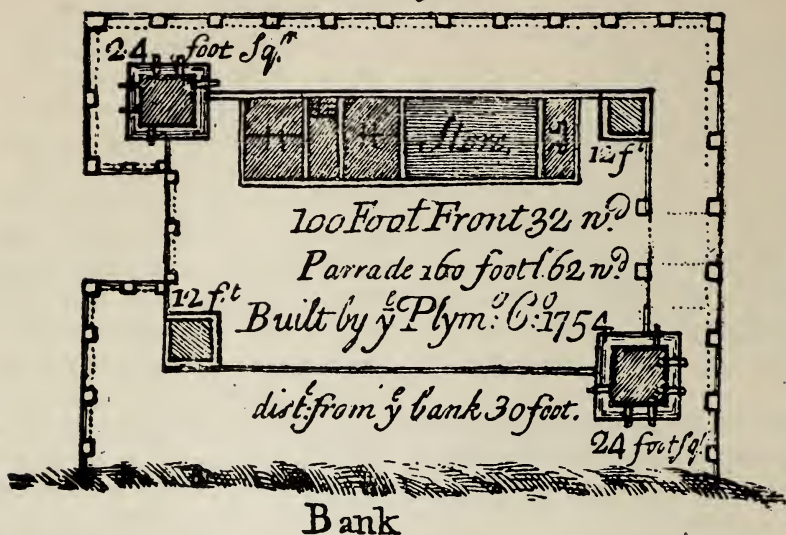
The articles of agreement signed by Gershom Flagg on May 7, 1754, to construct the Fort at Cushnoc, were as follows:—

“Articles of Agreement indented & made the Seventh day of May Anno Dom: 1754, in the Twenty Seventh year of His Majestys Reign, Between Gershom Flagg of Boston in the County of Suffolk Carpenter of the one part, and Thomas Hancock Esq; Silvester Gardiner Physician; William Bowdoin Mercht; Benjamin Hallowell Esq; & James Bowdoin Esq; all of Boston, a Committee appointed by the Plymouth Company respecting the Building a Fort or Garrison & Barrack & Store on Kennebec River near a place called Cushinau, of the other part as follows Viz; First the said Gershom Flagg doeth covenant & agree that he will with all convenient Speed proceed from said Boston to said Coushinau in

such Vessel the said Company shall provide & being there arrived he the said Gershom Flagg shall and will take upon him the supervising & management of said Buildings for the use of the said Plymouth Company agreeable to a plan drawn by the said Gershom Flagg and exhibited to said Committee. That the said Buildings shall be Hewen Timber and to Consist of Two Block Houses twenty four Feet square for two angles, and two Watch boxes twelve feet square each for the other two Angles, and a large Barrack & Store one hundred feet long, thirty two feet wide & two story high also of hewen Timber, the lower Story to be twelve inches thick & the Upper story ten inches thick, also to Picket in the Distance of Thirty feet from every Part of said Buildings.

“And the said Committee for themselves & for account & on Behalf of the said Plymouth Company do fully and absolutely Impower & Request the said Gershom Flagg to hire a number of hands the cheapest he can for Hewing Timber & Carrying on and Compleating said Buildings, and also do Impower the said Flagg to let out any Part of the Buildings by Jobb Lump or Otherwise as he shall judge most for said Companys advantage and further to purchase any Timber or other Lumber shingles Boards &c as he shall judge necessary for carrying on said Works, and the said Committee do Covenant & agree with the

Fort Western.



Plan of Fort Western

FROM A MAP ENGRAVED IN 1755 BY THOMAS JOHNSTON

said Flagg well & truly to pay or cause to be paid unto him the said Gershom Flagg his Executors or assigns for his Service in the Supervising & Management of said Buildings the sum of Five Shillings Sterling money of Great Britain per day for each and every day the said Gershom Flagg shall be in their Service and Employ; and further the said Committee do agree with the said Flagg to pay him for all and every Part of the Lumber materials & things he shall agree or engage for the use of said Company for & about said Works, also for hands he shall hire; and further said Committee

do Agree to pay on Demand all such Drafts the said Gershom Flagg shall draw in Consequence of any Agreement by the said Flagg made or which he shall make for the hire of hands or materials & things supplied for the said Companys use for or about said Works, for the payment of which drafts the said Gershom Flagg shall not be lyable, and Lastly the said Committee do Covenant and agree that the said Gershom Flagg shall have and hereby hath Liberty to advance & proceed from said Coushinaw with the Forces to Teconick the said Flagg appointing and leaving a pro-

The Building of Fort Western

per overseer in his room & stead to Carry on said Works.

"In Witness Whereof the said parties have hereunto Interchangeably sett their hands & Seals the day & year first before written

GERSHOM FLAGG.

"Signed, Sealed & Delivered in the presence of us

"Charles Apthorp

"Stephen Apthorp"

"Mem: Seventh May 1754. Before Signing & Sealing the aforegoing Contract the said Committee do agree with the said Flagg that he shall be at Liberty upon his leaving Couishinau to proceed for Treconick to lett or hire out the parts of said Buildings by Jobb Lump or otherwise, to such hands or Workmen as he shall appoint & Judge most for ye Benefit & advantage of said Plymouth Company, any thing in said Contract Contained to ye Contrary in any wise notwithstanding."

Gershom Flagg was then a man of nearly fifty years and already had had experience in frontier work having been at Fort Richmond in 1740 at the time it was rebuilt. He also went to the Penobscot in 1759 to rebuild Fort Pownal, as a contractor for a part of the work. When the lands at Cushnoc were laid out by the Company he received his share and some of the family settled on the land then received by him. He died suddenly in 1771 at the "Brattle Tavern", Boston. His nephew Gershom, Jr.,

who was employed at the building of Fort Western, lived at Lancaster, Mass., and afterwards settled at Clinton, Maine, where he died. The services of Gershom Flagg, Sr., began with May 2nd and continued until July 24th. The next day General Winslow and the troops (ten companies) set out on the march up the river to Teconnet and Flagg probably went with them as he had provided for in the terms of his contract with the Committee of the Proprietors. His work had been the getting out of the timber, hewing it and then seeing that it was rafted up the river from Richmond to Cushnoc. The expedition had reached Cushnoc on July 12th and undoubtedly the timber was built into the walls of the Fort immediately. Flagg's agreement provided that he should be paid at the rate of five shillings per day but his payroll shows that he received six shillings and eight pence.

Gershom Flagg, junior, was on the payroll from May 22nd. He entered as a carpenter and received £2.13.4 per month. He took charge of the work on July 22nd and afterwards submitted a payroll listing forty-five names none of which duplicate the names on his uncle's roll. These men were employed in "Building the Main House and Picketting in the Barracks and sundry other labours Done there", and were paid only one shilling and four pence per day usually only working a few days. Some of them were soldiers from the Concord, Mass., company

Fort Western on the Kennebec

then doing guard duty, and some were settlers living down the river who had come up to work on the Fort. Among other labor performed was the "carrying 24,300 Bricks from the Store to the house."

Capt. Eleazer Melvin of Concord, Mass., commanded a company of men that had been detailed for service in the Kennebec expedition and during its progress the clerk of the company, John Barber, kept a journal which is of considerable interest. The company of sixty-nine men marched from Concord on May 30, 1754 and the next day were transported from Medford to Castle William in Boston harbor where they remained until June 22nd when they embarked on board the sloop "Success," bound for Falmouth (now Portland). Governor Shirley sailed the same day on the ship "Shirley Galley." A violent storm came on the next day and the sloop put into York harbor. Almost all the men were sea sick and the gale "tore away our Gibb Saile which put our men into a great surprise," writes John Barber. Two days later the sloop set sail again and on the passage "Benjamin Kindale fell from the Bowle Spleat and went under the keele of the Sloop came up att the Stearn and Sprang up into the Whale Boate Laughing".

Falmouth was reached June 26th and there the troops camped on Bangs Island, until July 4th when the expedition sailed for the Kennebec river arriving at Fort Richmond

on the 6th. The following entries in the journal supply information as to events at Cushnoc and Teconnet:—

"July 8. Sailed from Richmonds Fort When the Raft of timber for the first fort Came up the river with above three hundred tons in it.

"July 12. Landed at Cooshenack where the English had Built a fort formerly.

"July 14. Col. Prebble and Capt. Melvin went up the River with forty two men in four whale boats to Teconnet seventeen miles to view a place where to build ye uper fort.

"July 18. The Gundelow came up from Richmonds fort with a number of carriage Guns and some stores.

"July 19. Capt. Josiah Church in the sloop Wheele of Fortune—arrived here with one hundred and Eight new Recrutes.

"July 25. Major General Winslow sett out upon the March from fort Western with ten Companies was saluted with the Discharge of five Great Guns: We had two Gundelows in the river ten Whale Boats and Eighteen Battoes with Stores.

"Ju'y 29. As the army were haling up the Gundelows over the first falls, ten Indians Came Down the river in four Canoes which alarmed the whole army who att first took them for Enemies. But they Proved to be friends for they Informed General Winslow of two men that had Deserted the Army viz: Thomas Filer & John Wall and had Gott up



Block House at Fort Halifax

NOW STANDING ON ITS ORIGINAL LOCATION AT WINSLOW, MAINE

as farr as Teconnett and had Sold one of their Guns which Gun they had Brought Down with them and the men were Gone for Canada; the General then gave orders to the Indians to follow them and Bringe them back Dead or alive and Promised them a Reward of fifty Pounds old tenour and ten Gallons of Rum.

"July 25. Major General Winslow with Part of his army Landed att Teconnett Point where the Plymouth Company had Built a fort above

one hundred years Since 42 Paces Longe.* In about two hours after we Landed two of the Indians Brought down the two Deserters to us and the General sent them to fort Western there to be kept waiting for the Governor's Orders:

"July 27. The General with the Captains held a Counsel to Consult where to build the Fort and agreed to set it where the old fort stood: In the

*This statement is an error. The earlier fort or trading post was at Cushnoc.



Block House Built in 1921 at Fort Western

afternoone the Guns and other Stores were haled up.

"July 28. The Flag was hoisted and att twelve of the Clock all the Guns were fired.

"July 30. Att night the Store house was Broke open by one of the Centery being in Liquor, a number of Limmonds were found with him, the next Day a Court Marshell was Called. He Beged forgiveness and was acquitted: this Day Col Prebble and Col Frye arrived here with a number of men & some stores.

"August 2. Capt Melven with three hundred and above Marched to fort Western for Bread the night following the Remaineing Part

of the army were alarmed by the firing three Guns over Sebasstooke river:

"August 5. The Maine Guard was Put under Guard by the Generals orders.

"August 6. Last night the two Deserters Cutt a hole thro the floor and are gone off Leaving their Cloathing behind them:"

On August 8th, General Winslow and 506 men began "the longe March for Norridgewalk," and John Barber went with them. Unfortunately the last of the journal is missing and so we lack his account of what he observed when he returned to Fort Western after the march up the Kennebec.

The Building of Fort Western

On the pay roll of Gershom Flagg, senior, his name appears as "Over-seer" and is followed by the names of sixteen carpenters, ten "schorers", four "labourers" and one teamster. One of the "schorers" was also paid for seven days labor "gondolowing", i.e. working on one of the large flat boats. John Edwards, a mason, worked half a month and Robert Williams, mason, was employed during the month of November. Solomon Jennings, "ye Smith," was paid for sundry jobs.

The logs used in building the walls of Fort Western were felled and hewn near Fort Shirley and then floated up the river on the tide, a measure of precaution against Indian attack that seemed necessary. Work on the main building dragged along for the fitting up of rooms and putting in place the interior finish was going on during the month of November. A letter from Gershom Flagg, junior, dated at "Fort Weston Sept'br 3d 1754", and addressed to Doctor Gardiner in Boston, runs as follows:—

"Sr. These Lines are to Enforme you that I am in Good Health at this time and I would Enforme you that I have Undertaken For to Do the work that My Uncle Gershom Flagg Has for to Do and through his Desire I Write to you for to Desire you to Send Me Down two Barels of Rhum and a half Barel of Melases and two Quire of Paper By Mr Thomas Church the Barer of

this Letter Commander of the Leopard; and your so Doing Will Oblige Me Yours to Serve:

"GERSHOM FLAGG, JR."

On September 11th, it was agreed with Aaron Willard to go down from Boston "with several hands to assist Mr. Flagg in finishing said Fort and by him a letter was sent to Samuel Oldham requesting him "to go to Cushnoc & build the Chimneys." The letter to Mr. Oldham follows:—

"Boston Septem. 12 1754.

"Mr. Sam. Oldham, Sr.

"As the Plymouth Comp. (so called) are concerned in building a Fort at Cushnac and in the Main house several Stacks of Chimneys will be wanted, we should be glad to employ you in building them and we will give you the same price for your work as Doctor Gardner gave you for what you did for him. We would have you use clay where you can & build them according to Mr. Gershom Flagg's plans. If this proposal is agreeable to you we desire you will begin & compleat the Work with all the Dispatch possible.

"We desire you will call at Frankfort & view some Lime we have there & let us know at first oppo whether there be enough, & whether it is good and fit for that use; the main house must be underpinned; & if you will undertake it we will pay you at the same Rate as Workmen are paid for such Work in Town, & we will take Care that

Fort Western on the Kennebec

you be reasonably supplied with Stones for that purpose.

“We are

“Your humb. Servt”

Unsigned copy of letter.

Samuel Oldham undertook the work for we find among the Company records the following bill for supplies delivered to him, viz:—

“Sundrys Delivered to Mr. Samuel Oldham by Captt James Howard at Fort Western

To 26 Galls Rum Deld	
at 28/ O T	£36.08.0
To 94 lb. Bread at 2/ O T	9.16.0
To 84 lb. Pork at 3/	12.12.0
To 3 pecks of potatoes at	
5/	15.0
To Sundrys paid to his	
workmen the Ewings of	
Topsham	6.00.0

Old Tenor £65.11.0

“This is a coppey of Captt James Howards account sent me Nov. 29, 1754.

“GERSHOM FLAGG”

An undated rough draft of a letter to Aaron Willard throws light on the methods employed in the construction of the Fort.

“Mr Aron Willard

“Sir We desire the favore of you to imploy Men to Gett a Quantity of Stone from the Bank about one quarter of a Mile above the Fort at Cushnock or elsewhere & put into a Gundalow of Doctor Gardner’s or Mr Goodwins and carry down the River and land them as nigh as possible to the Fort and then gett hands

to carry them up to the Fort; agree with the people by the great or otherwise as you think best in the cheapest manner you can to underpin the Fort; we desire you will take care that the Mason lay the foundation Deep enough that the fort may not heave it. The Government have got a Quantity of Bricks at Cushnoc which the Generall wrote us we might take out of which we would have you take what may be wanting to build the Chimneys and keep an acct. of them therefore”

The itemized bills rendered by Gershom Flagg, senior, to his nephew Gershom, who took charge of the work on July 22, 1754, and a similar bill rendered by the nephew covering work done by him, revealed many interesting items relating to the construction of the Fort.

May 22.

To 2½ Months Work at 53/4 pr	
month Ended July 24	
For Building the Great House	
100 feet Long & 32 Wide and	
finishing the 4 Block Houses	
with sundry other Jobs	£6.13.4
To my Work in finishing the 2	
Large Blockhouses	24.16.0
To finishing the two small Ditto	
.	2.10.8
	£27.06.8

Novm.

To Getting 16 Large Pillers and framing and Boarding the Main House and laying all Floors and making five Story of Stairs & all partitions Four partitions through the Main House in both Storys & 2 partitions in Cellar

The Building of Fort Western

of Ditto & Putting up all Windows making 14 Inner Doors & Cases & Sixteen Out Side Window Shutters & 3 Out Side Doors and Hanging all Ditto with Several other Jobbs also Sundry Disbursements as per Acc'tt.....145.7.6
 To Sundry Persons for Worke done about the picketing & gait Getting Stones Clay & Sand for the Masons Carrying Bricks & Water & Sundry other Labours.....36.6.9

£215.14.3

Mr Gershom Flagg to Gershom Flagg Junr

For work done on the East River framing Blockhouses &c for Cushnoc for the Plymouth Company and finishing Ditto per Agreement

July 22, 1754

To two months & half work framing the Blockhouses at 53/46.13.4
 To finishing two Large Blockhouses at 12.8.0.....24.16.0
 To finishing two Large Flankers at 1.5.4.....2.10.8
 To Hewing 400 feet of Timber for Sumers & Beams....2.02.8
 To Hewing 2444 feet of Timber for said Houses.....13.00.8
 To Hewing 400 feet & Rafting the same.....2.02.8
 To framing of 183 Squair of framing & Boarding ye Roof67.02.0
 To Shingling of 42 Squairs at 4/8 per Squair.....9.14.8
 To Laying of 84 Squair of Ruff floors at 3/.....12.12.0
 To making all partitions Plain'd and Tongu'd13.06.8
 To makeing 14 Inner Doors Panneled & Battin'd.....3.05.4

To makeing & Hanging 3 Out Side doors.....16.9
 To makeing 4 pairs of plan'd Stairs & 1 pair Ruff do...3.04.0
 To making the Outside Celler Doors & frame Comp....9.4
 To makeing 7 hanging 16 Window Shutters at 1/6.....1.06.8
 To makeing of Cabbins for 22 men & a Guard Birth for 8 men.....1.08.0
 To Hewing of timber & framing & planking up the Vacant parts of each End of the House & Joyning and Makeing a Gate in Ditto2.08.0
 To makeing of Dressers & Shelves & Sink.....13.4
 To makeing 3 Dormond Windows in ye Roof at 6/ each. 18.0
 To Capt Thos. Cobb for himself & 4 hands 2 days in Getting Sixteen Large pillars to sett the Main House upon.....1.01.4
 To framing & Setting up the Great Gate Posts & Rails 12.0
 To Cash paid Wm. Hodgskins for 8 days Labour in Bringing up Plank & Joice in the Lighter.....1.01.4
 To 2 Days myself for Lime att Frankfort.....6.8
 To Cash paid Capt. Howard for 500 wt. of Hay at 2/10.0
 To 5 Days to Arowisik after Hay.16.8
 To Cash pay'd a man from Richmond for Ditto.....6.0
 To Cash paid for half a Tun of Hay att Arrowsick.....18.8

To the Disbursement for Raising the Great house pd by G. Flagg

To 75lb. of Pork To half Hun'd Bread at 21/4 per Cwt...1.13.0
 To two Bushels of potatoes at 2/ To 1 Gall Mollosses at 2/2 6.2
 To 17½ Gallons of Rum at 2/8 per Gall'n.....2.06.8

Fort Western on the Kennebec

To 6 Days provisions for 5
hands whilst picketting Viztt.
To 30 lb. of Bread at 1/8 per
lb. 30 lb. of Pork at 2/6
To 6 Quarts Beans at 2/.. 18.3½

£179.07.6½

The newspapers published at Boston occasionally supply information relating to the work going on at the Kennebec. In the August 6th, issue of the *Boston Gazette* is published some account of Governor Shirley's expedition in which it is stated that the Governor took passage for Falmouth in the ship *Burieu*, Capt. Inches, instead of in the *Shirley Galley*, as recorded by John Barber. The newspaper continues with some account of the conference with the Indians at Casco Bay and after mentioning the Fort at Cushnoc states that cannon had been mounted at Treconick and the ground marked out for a fort.

In the August 27th issue of the *Gazette* is printed a glowing account of the Kennebec country undoubtedly written by one of the proprietors with the thought of encouraging settlers to emigrate. The writer evidently accompanied the expedition when it went up the river from Fort Richmond.

“Extract of a letter from Cushnoc (in the Eastern Parts of the Province) dated July 23d, 1754.

“—When we left Frankfort to go to Richmond, I was surpriz'd to see on the ground, and that had not been clear'd this two years, English

Grass as high as a man's middle and as thick as it could stand; and the English Corn was so extraordinary, that it put me in mind of the Seven Years Plenty in the Land of Egypt: upon counting the Stalks that sprung from one Root, they amounted to above Eighty. On the 10th we travel'd up Cobaseconta River, which affords fine Falls; At two Miles Distance from the mouth, I suppose ten Mills might be erected, and Water enough to keep them going all the Year:—In returning, we struck off from the River to the westward, which is all oak land, no under-Brush, and the Trees very scattering, & might easily be cleared, and as fine a soil and as beautiful a Country as any Man can possibly desire to settle in; and abounds with plenty of divers sorts of Fish. Then we proceeded up the River to Cushnoc, where we have built the Fort; above which 'tis shoal in several places, and the channel very intricate, which nothing but Experience will make us Masters of. The Banks of the Point on which the the Fort stands is about 30 Feet high, and commands the River for a Mile up, and as far down; there is some High Land on the Back of it, but out of Musket shot; and a Block-house on that Hill would prevent the approach of an Enemy. We have raised two Block Houses 24 Feet square each and two Watch-Boxes each 12 Feet square; the Pickets are cut, and part of the Trench dug; and a fine road is made from

The Building of Fort Western

the Water up the Bank. On the 14th we went towards Teconnick to sound the River, and found not more than three Feet of Water in several Places that might be then depended on, considerable Falls in several Places, the Stream very rapid, and many shoal Rocks; the Water being then very low in the River, 'tis thought it might be better passing when the Freshets are higher. The country between Cushnoc and Teconnick consists of exceeding good land, has a vast Quantity of white Oak Timber, considerable Intervals of Grass on the sides of the River as high as a man's head; and, where we propose to build the Fort, there is an Hundred Acres of Land clear,—and, as to the Pleasantness of the Scituation, I think it exceeds any I ever saw in the woods. There is nothing wanting to make this the most flourishing Part of the Province, but to be well settled with People, whose industry would prompt them to cultivate the Lands, and whose Frugality would prevent them from running into Extravagancy. In short, the Land appears to me capable of yielding every thing that can be expected from the most fertile Part of this Province; and the building these Forts will be a great Protection to the Inhabitants."

The September 10th issue of the same newspaper announces the return of Governor Shirley to Boston the day before and states that a road of communication is to

be made between Cushenoc, and Teconnet for the transportation of stores and marching soldiers and will be finished in a few days.

Among other papers relating to the building of Fort Western is a "Memorandum" signed by Samuel Goodwin, the surveyor of the Company, a proprietor who lived much of the time at Frankfort. He evidently hoped to secure a contract to build the block houses at the new fort. The detailed estimate is of much curious interest and furnishes the information that originally the block houses may have had brick chimneys and glazed windows.

"MEMORANDUM

To a block House 20 feet Sqr.
8 feet high

To finding all Timber for the Sides Roof & Floors 1000 feet at 3.10.00 O. T. pr hundred	35.0.0
To Joyce for the floors hewed or Sawed 350 at the rate of 12 pr M	4.5.0
To framing and Raising ye House	35.0.0
To boards 1M and half at £13. pr thousand at the Spot.	19.0.0
To 4 thousand Shingles at 1.5.0.	13.0.0
To Laying 4 thousand Shingles at 1.5.0.	5.0.0
To boarding the Roof and gabel ends Chamfered	3.15.0
To Laying 2 floors Ruff.	2.10.0
To making 2 window Frames finding Stuff	3.00.0
To making a plank door and hanging it with wooden hinges and finding plank	3.10.0

Fort Western on the Kennebec

To 3 thousand brick for these chimneys at 6.0.0 at Frank-fort.....	18.0.0
To gundolowing to the Spot	6.0.0
To Laying 3 thousand of brick at £4. a thousand.....	12.0.0
To 2 bushels of Lime to ton this chimney.....	1.0.0
To 4 thousand Shingle nails for the block House & 1½ thous- and board ditto.....	10.10.0
To hawling all Timber for the block House.....	8.0.0

the whole lott at one block House	176.10.0
	2.10.0

old Tenor	£180.00.0
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“I can have the Houses built for the above sum for each house
“Sam’l Goodwin”

How did the two forts, Halifax and Western, obtain their names? Hutchinson, writing not long after they were built, states that the fort at Taconnett falls was named by Governor Shirley “out of respect for the then Secretary of State”—Lord Halifax. The fort at Cushnoc, the Governor “called Fort Western from a gentlemen of his acquaintance in Sussex, England.” This probably was Thomas Western who died in 1765, and whose mother was Mary, sister of Sir Richard Shirley of Preston, co. Sussex. Governor Shirley was born in 1693 at Preston, co. Sussex, and the Shirleys and Westerns of Preston intermarried several times.

What Happened at Fort Western

LONG before constructive work at Fort Western was completed General Winslow placed Lieutenant James Howard in command of the men stationed there. James Howard was a Scotchman who had settled at St. George's in the Waldo Patent about 1736 and having become thoroughly familiar with conditions along the Maine frontier had joined Governor Shirley's expedition to the Kennebec. His family soon followed him, at first living at Fort Richmond and later at Fort Western. His brother Lieutenant Samuel Howard also came to the Kennebec at about the same time and served as a lieutenant under Captain Lithgow in command at Fort Halifax. Because of possible Indian attack no attempt was made to settle the country about the Fort until after the fall of Quebec in 1759 and no houses were built at Cushnoc outside the palisade until then. The Fort never was attacked. It retained its garrison, nevertheless, because of unsettled Indian affairs and as late as January, 1764, Governor Bernard recommended to the General Court that the Fort be main-

tained. In 1762 the garrison was reduced to one lieutenant, one armourer, two sergeants and thirteen privates. Preserved in the State Archives at Boston, is a letter from Lieut. James Howard written to Lieut-Governor Phips announcing his appointment as commander of the Fort.

"Fort Richmond Octbr 11th 1754

"May it please your Excellency (Agreeable to General Winslos Orders to me) I have taken the Command of Fort Western But find a needessity of coming here when the Indians com to Trade (Which is But Seldom) those that Com here tell me that there is several of the Naridgwalk Indians gone to Canada and When thay Left naridgwalk they Intended To Joyn the Arse-gonticooks, to Commit hostilities on our fronteers to the Westward. I intend to spend part of my time here and part at Fort Western till furdur orders from your Excellency (or till Capt. Lithgow's Return from Boston) But alwise will keep one of my sons ther and the other here which is Carefull young men and well Aquainted with Garrison affaires, till your Excellency pleas to order otherwise--

"I have sent your Excellency a barrel of potatoes per this Bearer

Fort Western on the Kennebec

Capt. McFadien which I pray your Excellency to Except From

“your most dutifull obedient and humble servant

“JAMES HOWARD”

The threatened Indian attack did not materialize but the frontier evidently believed it impending for late in the following winter Lieutenant Howard wrote to Governor Shirley of the probable attack in the spring and urged that better guns be sent to him at once. “We have no Coulers for this Fort,” he wrote. His letter is in the Massachusetts State Archives.

“Fort Western March 5th 1755

“May it plesse your Excellency, I am Very Loath to trouble you at this time Knowing you are in a croud of Business at this Junctor, but Beges your patiance to hear me a little, the provence Guns we have hear are not to be Depended on, therefore I pray you: I order Som better, it is Very probable we shall have som of our Franch and Indian Enemies to Visit us this Spring and our Number of men is Small, the Ground about our fort is Very advantagous for our Enemies, now as our Enemies are Knowing to this and Expects a great Quantity of Stores here now Whither these may not be motives to Excite them to make their first and most Resolute attack here and by that means think they may Get Cannon to anoy the other Forts, I Desire not to be teadious or troublesom to your Excellency But Leave it to your wise Consideration Whither we Don't Stand in Need of more men and more and better Guns Seeing I Expect to have orders to send a detechment

of my men upon Several occasions perticularly to Guard up the Sloops with the Stores, and this detechment must be the Best of the men, and our Enemies Who Can Ly within one hundred and fifty yard of our Fort In one of the Gulies and we Cannot anoy them from our forts, and they Seeing us go out so Whither it may not Indenger the forts being Taken. We have no Coulers for this Fort. I Conclud With Wishing His majesties arms Success and Victory, Both by sea and Land and you health and prosperety I beg Leave to Subscribe myself your Excellencys most Dutifull most obedient and Humbl Servent

“JAMES HOWARD”

This threatened Indian attack also seemed impending to Captain Lithgow in command up the river at Fort Halifax and he demanded two hundred men to strengthen his post. They were to arrive at Fort Western on May 10th, 1755, but delayed coming in order “to finish Sowing & planting their Fields,” and three days later Captain Lithgow wrote to Governor Shirley, in something of a panic, urging haste on the part of the Government. A month later Captain Lithgow wrote to the Governor and gave some interesting details in relation to the methods employed in transporting military stores from Fort Western to Fort Halifax.

“May it please Your Excellency with submission I would acquaint you, that ther Is now Lodged In Fort Hallifax a Suffieny of all Sorts of provisions to Subsist ye garrison there posted, till ye middle of next

Fort. Western march 5 1755

may it please your Excellency I am Very Loath to trouble
you at this time knowing you are in aroud of business at this
Season but Beges your patience to hear me a little the
providence Gave we have heartire not to be Depended on therefore
I pray your order som better it is Very probable we shall
have som of our french and Indian Enemies to Visit us this
spring and our number of men is small the Ground about our
fort is Very advantageous for our Enemies now as our
Enemies are knowing to this and Expects a great Quanti-
ty of stores here ^{now} whether these may not be motives to Excite
them to make their first and most Resolute attack here
and By that means think they may get Cannon to annoy
the other Forts I Desire ^{to be} not tedious or troublesome to your
Excellency But Leaves it to your wise Consideration whether
we Don't stand in need of more men and more and better
Guns being I Expect to have orders to send aditchments
to my men upon several occasions particularly to Guard up
the Sloops with the Stores and this detachment must be the
Best of the men and our Enemies who Can Ly within one
hundred and fifty yard of our Fort In one of the Gulies and we
cannot annoy them from our fort and they seeing us go out so
whether it may not Indanger the forts being taken
we have no Counters for this Fort. I Conclude with wishing
His majesties arms success and Victory both by sea and land
and you health and prosperety I Beg Leave to Subscribe
myself your Excellencys most Dutifull most obedient
and Humble Servent James Howard

Fort Western on the Kennebec

February, I should have conveyed ye whole of ye stores theither had ye River permitted, but being Dissappointed by ye Forces not appering at Fort Western according to the Time perficed which was ye 10th of May, and thay not appering till ye 22d ye same month, by which Time the River was fallen that we could not go up but 5 Tripps ye last of which we Could not Carry our Boates more then halfe Lodned, for which Reason, as also Considering that ye Expençe of such guard would be grate to ye province I accordingly Dismissed those Forces Judging it no ways for ye advantage of ye government to Keep them Longer then we Could go up the River with lodned Boates, the above five Tripps was preformed In Ten Days goin up one Day & Coming Down the next, the Wether being Dyre Rested nott one Day Except ye Sabbath, as your Excellency was plesed to give me ye Direction of all those Forces and least any difficulty Should arise for want of my presents I Continued with them boath In their goaing up & Down ye River, ye first 3 Tripps we mad, our Number of Men Consisted of 150 halfe of which was Imploy'd In ye Boates So that I look on't we ware but very Weake as ye men In ye Boates Could not have been of a mediat Service, as their armes ware Stowed In Such a manner to Keep them Drye So that thay Could not be prepared as those on ye Land had we ben attacted, ye Last Two Tripps our Number was Increased to about 200 men Including 20 men out of Fort Halifax and 6 out of Fort Western I had Determined to move my Family to Fort Hallifax but found it Impossible as there was no Room, for we have filled 2 of ye Baricks

with Stores and had we Carried all ye Stores up Should have filled ye other 2 or neer upon it, that ye Souldiers would have been forced to have Lodged out of Doors ye Boates which I gave a pettron by forming a piece of wood, to mr Moody of Brunswick answers ye end very well, but ye two Built in Boston may be recalled as being of no advantage here, So that we had but 3 Botes In Steed of Six that would ansvar, and had we had ye number I prescribed, Should have Convay'd ye whole of ye Stores as Soon as what we did, was obliged to Gitt Whail Boates at Falmouth and Canooas, we had good Success never hurt one of our Boates, or wett one mouthfull of ye provisions.

"Your Excellencys Most Dutifull Servant

"WILLIAM LITHGOW"

An order dated July 15, 1755 reduced the joint garrisons to a total number of eighty men, twenty of whom were stationed at Fort Western. Rumors of Indians lurking about the frontier led to reinforcing the forts in the fall of 1756 but it was not until the following May that an Indian raid actually took place. A letter from Lieutenant Howard to the Council related what happened.

"Fort Western 18th May 1757

"May it please yr honours Capt Lithgow Sent down a boats Crew consisting of ten men as far as Brunswick to fetch up Lieut. Moody in order to mend our Boats, and this morning about Seven o Clock Ensign Petee was returning home and we thought it best to Send two men by Land as an

What happened at Fort Western

advance Guard, and the other eight in the boat and when they were about Seven miles above this fort then the two men on the Shore who kept Just about three or four Rod before the Boat, discover'd a Scout of Seventeen Indians Close on the Shore and fired on the Boat three times not being more than fifteen yards distance, and our people returned the fire three times out of the boat and as they could not recover the Indians side of the river they put across the river recover'd that shore a fired Several Guns, one of the men that were on the Shore Lept into the river and Swam across the river tho' the freshet is very high and the other was Seen under a Root and we hope the enemy has not found him but he is not returned yet it is now about two hours Since the action. There is two of our men wounded but I hope they are not mortal, all our people declare that they saw the Indians Carry off two dead or wounded of their own party.

"I conclude with begging Leave to Subscribe myself yr Honours most Hble Serv't.

"JAMES HOWARD"

Samuel Goodwin writing to the Council the same day gave a similar account of the skirmish and states that one man "hath a bullet Lodged in his Leage & slightly wounded in several places in his body & head ye other in his Shoulder & Cheake Lieutenant Howard Came here with them about 5 o Clock this afternoon, I having ye Remains of a Doctors Box which I gott Last year of my own; I dressed them in the best Manner I could."

The men who enlisted or were impressed in 1756 for the term of one year for service in the Kennebec forts seem to have been forgotten by the Government in Boston. Supplies were shipped to the forts each spring and fall but the men were not discharged and allowed to return to their homes. A letter from Lieutenant Howard dated December 10, 1758 gives the names of three men stationed there who "were Uneasy by Reason of their Being so long Detained in the Service at this Fort." These men were Morris Wheeler, William Brooks and John Gazlin. Captain Lithgow also sent the names of fifteen men serving at Fort Halifax. On Jan. 17, 1759, Governor Pownall sent a message to the Council and House of Representatives and presented the case of these forgotten soldiers. He frankly stated that "the Government had broke Faith," and men enlisted for one year had been kept in service for three years and were still in the forts on the Kennebec. "If I dismiss them the Garrison must be broke up & dismantled; if I detain them we shall continue within ourselves . . . an Example that this Government once greivously complained of." As a result, these men at last were discharged and other men sent to strengthen the garrisons.

In the summer of 1759, Quebec was attacked by General Wolfe and about the same time General Amherst attempted to clear the French

Sent Mailed 16th May 1757

May it please y^r honours Capt. Lithgow sent down ~~the~~ crew consisting of ten men as far as Cranford to fetch up, Lieu. & Moody in order to meet our Boat, and this morning about seven o'clock English Pelic was returning home and we thought it best to send two men by Lane as an advance guard, and the other eight in the boat and when they were about seven miles above this fort then the two men on shore there who kept just about three or four Rod before the Boat, discovered a sort of a Sencient Indians Close on the shore and fired on the Boat three times not being more than fifteen yards distance, and our people returned the fire three times out of the boat and as they could not recover those Indians side of the River they put a cross the river recovered that shore a fired several Guns, one of the men that was on the shore Lept into the river and swam across the river tho the first shot is very high, and the other was seen under a Rod and we hope the enemy has not found him but we hope he is not returned yet it is now about two hours since the action.

There is two of our men wounded but I hope they are not mortal, all our people declare that they saw the Indians Carry off two dead or wounded of their own party I conclude with begging Leave to Subscribe myself y^r Honours most Hble Serv.^t

James Howard

To the Honourable
his majesties Council
In Boston

What Happened at Fort Western

from Lake Champlain after which the capture of Montreal was to follow. Desiring to inform General Wolfe of the progress of his campaign, dispatches were sent by General Amherst in care of one Ensign Hutchins who traveled by way of Albany and Boston and reached Fort Western on the Kennebec on Aug. 17th, 1759. The messenger aimed to proceed by the most direct route, the route selected seventeen years later by Benedict Arnold. It was a journey attended with great hardship and beset with danger from both French and Indian enemies. On arriving at Fort Western, Ensign Hutchins placed himself in the hands of the Howards, and John Howard, the eldest son of James Howard and second in command at the Fort, volunteered to accompany the dispatch-bearer. Here is what happened during their hazardous journey as told in the October 8th, 1759 issue of the *Boston Gazette*:—

“Ensign Hutchins left Fort Western on the Kennebec River the 18th of August last, in Company with Mr Howard and two others, with dispatches for General Wolfe, which he delivered at the Camp at Point Levee the 3d of September being out 17 Days and Nights; that they saw several Scouts in their way undiscovered; that they were so near Chaudiere, which he says is a fine settlement, that they saw and heard the Enemy threshing their grain; that it is a plentiful country; that they took two men and a Woman about half way from

Chaudiere to St. Lawrence River by whom they gained some intelligence as to the situation of our Army; that they had no Provisions for 4 Days before they got in, and were almost starved, being tired out with rubbing thro’ the Brush, &c. which tore their Clothes to pieces, but not their Flesh; that had it not been for the Intelligence gain’d by the Prisoners above mentioned, whom they afterwards released, they should have delivered up themselves to the first Party they came across; . . . that they were properly taken Care of and well Cloathed immediately upon their Arrival. That they left Quebec in Capt. Haynes for this Place the 8th of September, and was taken the 30th, off Black Point, by a Privateer Sloop of 4 Swivel Guns and 50 Men, who were all double arm’d, and who fired a discharge of their Small Arms and killed the man at the Helm; that they had an English Captain on board, whom they before had taken, and whom they made hale Captain Haynes, otherwise he says they should have got clear; that they however fired 300 Small Arms at them before they struck; that the Enemy rob’d the Men of all they had and him of everything he had saving his Hat, not even sparing his Commission; but that he threw over Gen. Wolfe’s Answers to Gen. Amherst’s Letters just before they struck. Ensign Hutchins came to Town last Thursday Afternoon, and set off the next day for General Amherst. He left Mr Howard at Halifax, he being so poorly he could not come up.”

Two years after this, John Howard was one of a party of fifteen men commanded by his father, sent out by the Government to explore

Fort Western on the Kennebec

and survey the upper Kennebec and the "carrying place" leading to the Chaudiere. While in the woods one day John Howard saw what he judged to be a bear moving in the underbrush and firing killed the surveyor of the party. This unhappy accident so effected Howard that before long he became insane. "He lived long at the fort, gentle and inoffensive, but possessed of immense imaginary wealth." So wrote Judge Weston in 1851. May we not also fancy that the hardships that he suffered in 1759 while guiding General Amherst's dispatch-bearer, in some degree contributed to his unhappy state. A Boston newspaper of the time supplies this contemporaneous account of what took place on the unfortunate surveying expedition:—

"About a Fortnight ago a melancholy Affair happened at the Eastward:—Mr Small, an ingenious & improv'd Surveyor, being employed by the Government to reconnoitre and explore that Part of the Country which lies between Fort Halifax on Kennebec River, and the River Chaudre, and so on to Quebec; he was attended by Capt. Howard, and a party of 9 Men, and had set out from the Fort upon that Business; but when they had got about 120 Miles Distance, one Day about Twelve o'Clock, Mr Small being within some Bushes taking an Observation, one of the Men perceived a rustling and something move apprehended it to be some wild Beast, unhappily fired and shot him dead upon the spot."

Boston Gazette, Oct. 19, 1761.

At the time Fort Western was built not a settler was living farther up the river than Fort Richmond. The settlement at Gardiner began in 1760 and grants were first made to settlers at Cushnoc in 1762. Rev. Jacob Bailey, "the Frontier Missionary," records in his journals that many of "the first settlers lived in miserable huts half of which were without chimneys and many people were without beds other than a heap of straw." One Nathan Winslow made the Cushnoc survey for the Kennebec Company and by 1764 thirty-seven lots had been conveyed to settlers who occupied them.

James Howard was the largest landowner at that time as was befitting the most influential man in the little frontier settlement. He received grants in 1763, 1764, and 1769 which totalled 800 acres and he also owned 1280 acres in the fourth range of lots lying easterly and away from the river. William Howard, his son, also was granted 550 acres in favored locations. The Howards were then living at the Fort which probably was somewhat remodelled about that time. When first built it was fitted up with officer's quarters at each end with a large space left for storage in the center of the building. This central space afterwards became the "trucking house" and store conducted by the Howards. There was a cellar under the building and the lower course of logs composing the walls rested on a stone foun-

What Happened at Fort Western

dition. These logs were squared and dove-tailed at the corners of the building. The log walls seem to have been covered at once with shingles laid with an exposure of eight inches to the weather, for the hewn surfaces of the logs when uncovered today, show no evidence of exposure to the weather. It is quite plain from this that the Kennebec Company built in a more substantial manner than did the Province when it spent large sums in the erection of Fort Halifax. In a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor, dated October 17, 1755, Samuel Goodwin, one of the proprietors, writes that the logs used to erect the large building at Fort Halifax, were hewn so that "the upper Side of the under peace is hewed Hollow to bring them to a Joynt and in Driving stormes the Rane Drives into the Joynts and there stands and being hid from the Sun Continaues wett for a long time; and rots the Timber very much which is a Great Damage to such buildings . . . which aught to be Covered amediately Either with fether Eadge Boord so as to Break Joynts or Else elaboorde." Goodwin inclosed a memorandum estimating the cost of putting the garrison building in proper repair for the sum of £550. It provided for 10,000 clapboards "to be Large 6 inches wide," at £22. per thousand. The cost of laying the clapboards was estimated at £15. per thousand. "To making 46 window Caps & Casing the Same



Dove-tailed Logs at a Corner
of Fort Western

to Receive the ends of the Clapboards. To Casing 32 ports & Lookouts & 10 doors and making all weather boards Corner boards and water Tables and Casing 160 feet of a Jet, £180." It should be borne in mind that the de-

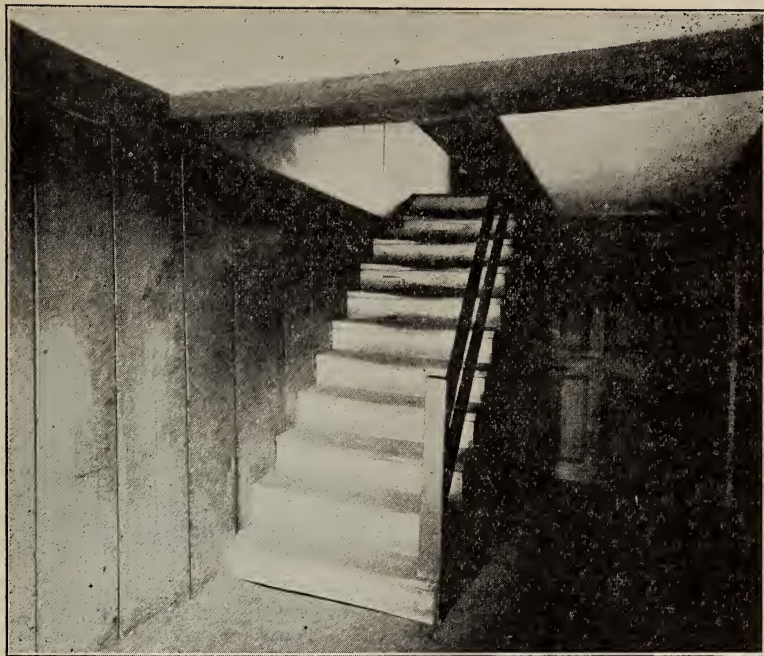


**Paneling in a First Floor Room at Fort Western
Before Restoration**

preciation in the value of money at that time is accountable for the seemingly high costs shown in the estimate.

It is difficult to determine at this late day if the wood trim and panelled-work in the rooms at either end of Fort Western were placed there when the building was erected. Similar work was common at that time throughout the Province and anticipating the occupancy of the Fort by the family of the officer in command it is reasonable to suppose that the officers' quarters

would be made comfortable in the manner of the time and also be finished in the architectural style of the period, the work being done by carpenters who had been brought from Boston and vicinity. Certain it is that the prosperous Captain Howard, when he came into possession of the property in 1769. would have replaced any rough sheathing with the present trim. In the center of the Fort are some early partitions made of pine planks two inches thick, butted at the joints and unplanned.



Original Stairs and Sheathed Partition in the
Southern Entry at Fort Western

Most of the early inch sheathing is molded at the joints with a three-eighths inch bead and one short partition remains, in the center of the Fort, built of inch boards with the long bevelled and molded edge of the early period and there are two batten doors made of this sheathing. The oldest doors in the officers' quarters are of two panels with a wide bevelled molding and are hung on H and HL or strong "butterfly" hinges. The staircase at the southerly end of the building is undoubtedly contem-

poraneous with the erection of the Fort. The newel posts are about four inches square and the treads are of two inch plank. The staircase at the northerly end is of a later date—perhaps about the year 1800.

There are four chimneys. The two at either end rest on stone foundations built up to the level of the sills. The two intermediate chimneys rest on barrel-arches built of brick in the usual manner. The brickwork is laid with clay mortar with some fine sand in its composition. The bricks

Fort Western on the Kennebec

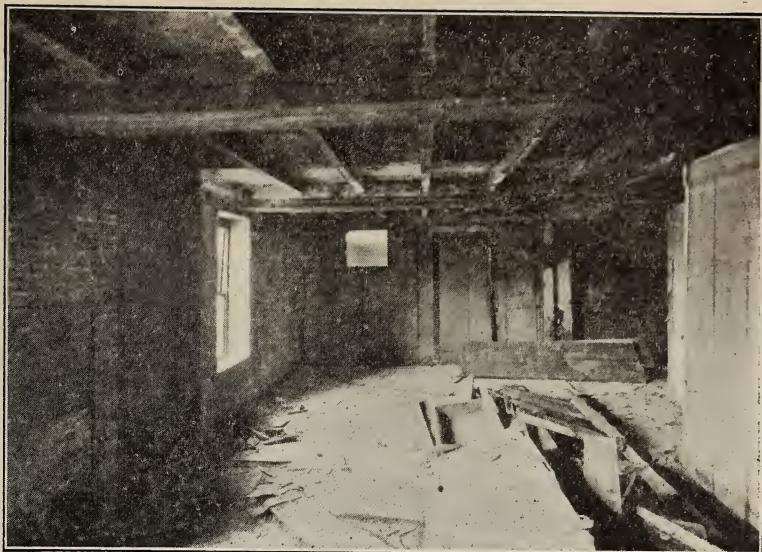
are of common size, of good molding and fired to a good red color. Brick tiles were used in most of the hearths and the fireplaces have flat iron lintel bars. The fireplaces in the end chimneys (two on each floor) are small in size. The rear first floor fireplaces, in the intermediate chimneys, are large kitchen fireplaces and the older of the two is seven feet wide and forty-nine inches high at the opening. The other is five feet wide and forty-four inches high. Both have chimney-breast brick ovens the smaller fireplace having a very large oven which has been rebuilt at a later date and supplied with an oven door. Both of these kitchen fireplaces were equipped with cranes. A small "ash door" is on the left-hand side of the smaller kitchen fireplace and *inside* the same which probably indicates an earlier brick oven built *inside* the fireplace in the old manner. The appearance of the brickwork over the "ash door" seems to indicate filling in or rebuilding where the opening for this early oven may have been.

The walls and ceilings of the officers' quarters are plastered and also the rear kitchens. The lime is well calcined though parts of it contain small fragments of shells. The laths are rifted and on the outer walls are nailed directly to the squared logs.

Early descriptions of Fort Western record that the window openings were supplied with plank shut-

ters and this was shown to be true by the discovery of holes in the log walls beside the first story windows into which the iron gudgeons were driven on which the shutter hinges swung. No gudgeon holes were found beside the second story windows.

While exploring the building and removing some of the later work an interesting discovery was made of the original door opening into the "trading post" in the central part of the Fort. The opening had been cut through the wall of squared logs and closed by a batten door of pine planks four inches thick. The restored door measures eighty inches high and forty-nine inches wide. Several of the original planks used in making the door had been utilized to fill up the opening when this door was discontinued and the outside was then shingled over. At the same time the inside wall was sheathed up thereby concealing all evidence of the existence of this early door. These planks, now incorporated in the restored door, were originally painted Indian red as was the simple outside trim as shown by daubings of red here and there on the logs. This massive door was strongly nailed together but the surfaces of the planks supplied the evidence that it never was studded with large-headed nails in the 17th century fashion. Moreover, this door never was supplied with a latch. The peculiar location of nail holes and the wearing away of



**Trading Post Room in Fort Western
During Restoration**

the surface of the wood in a curved line disclosed the former existence of a ring that was used to pull the door open from the outside. A plank, formerly on the inside of the door, was cut out to receive an old-fashioned wooden box-lock and the jamb of the door had a mortice, guarded by a small plate of iron to strengthen and prevent wear on the edge of the mortice, into which the bolt of the lock slipped as the large key was turned.

In 1730 there was built at Saco River, by order of the Province, a "Truck-House" or trading post and the Massachusetts Archives preserve details of its construction by

which some interesting comparisons may be made with the somewhat similar building erected at Cushnoc twenty-five years later. The "Truck-House" was built of timber and surrounded by a palisade with "flankers" at the corners. It was supplied with brick chimneys and the brick was made on the spot at a cost of seven shillings per day for labor. The building was shingled and the windows were supplied with casement sash. The fashion of casement sash was then going out and twenty-five years later the windows in the Fort at Cushnoc had sliding sash and rectangular lights of glass instead of the diamond

Fort Western on the Kennebec

panes used in the casements. In one of the bills against the Province, at the time the Saco "Truck-House" was built, appears the following item: "1 gall Linseed Oyle, 10 of ground priming & 10 red Led £1:17:4."

Capt. James Howard and his family were long looked up to as the leading and most influential settlers on the upper Kennebec. As early as 1764 it was said that they owned "two Sloops about eighty tons each, and have two saw mills which employed at least twenty hands and have besides a large stock of Cattle, and carry on a considerable Trade." Before long they practically monopolized the timber trade on the upper Kennebec and had the confidence of every one. Their will was law. The historian of Augusta preserves the following significant incident. "A rumor was afloat that a *strange* vessel was coming up the river to trade. This was regarded as interfering with the rights which the Howards had acquired by early and exclusive occupation, and the question was earnestly asked, 'Will the Howards let them come?'"

After obtaining in 1763 large grants of land at Cushnoc, Captain Howard built a "Great House" on a location about a mile up the river from the Fort and there he lived until his death in 1787. It was the first framed house in the settlement and was destroyed by fire in 1866.

On the 16th of December, 1769, the Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase sold to Captain Howard, Fort Western and about nine hundred acres of surrounding land. The consideration was only £270. lawful money. In 1781, he conveyed the northern half to his four children and his son William lived there until his death in 1810.

In the early days of the settlement all public meetings were held at the Fort, and even after Hallowell was incorporated town meetings were generally held at Fort Western until the meeting house was built in 1782. The first public religious service in Cushnoc was held at the Fort, in 1763, by Rev. Jacob Bailey, the "Frontier Missionary", who recorded in his diary that he had on that occasion "a considerable congregation of the upper settlers." He afterwards preached at the Fort at frequent intervals. The first marriage at Cushnoc was solemnized at the Fort in 1763, when Margaret Howard was married by her father who, as Justice of the Peace, was the only person in the settlement qualified to perform the ceremony. Her husband was Capt. James Patterson.

Capt. Samuel Howard and his brother Colonel William Howard, sons of Capt. James, formed a partnership under the firm name of S. & W. Howard and for many years engaged in trade and shipping. William lived at the Fort and managed the business, selling the goods

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Hallowell ye 25 of July 1783

I have Received of Co^l Josiah
Brewar fourteen moose skins ten beaver
skins wt 14 1/2 lbs thirty two sable skins
three minks one otter one fisher three
musquosks the above skins have
shipped on board sloop hope Tobias
cookman master which he will deliver
to you on his arrival in Boston. is the
above mentioned skins with what is sent
to you in the spring by my brother Sam^l
Howard is all that I have Received of Co^l
Brewar from your Very Humble servant

Richard Stevens Esq^r

William Howard

Fort Western on the Kennebec

which Samuel purchased in Boston and elsewhere and shipped to Cushnoc in the vessels owned by the brothers. This firm supplied an outlet for the small settlement on the Kennebec and brought the necessities of civilization to the growing population. The sloops of the Howards would carry to Boston cargoes composed of staves, shingles, salmon, moose skins and furs and return loaded with pork, corn, flour, shoes, articles of clothing, West India goods and a liberal supply of rum which was freely used by all in those days. Furs were an item of considerable value and embraced shipments of sable, beaver, otter, fox, mink and other skins. The sloops also went on voyages to Newfoundland and the West Indies.

The Revolution brought Fort Western again into prominence. In the summer of 1775, Colonel Benedict Arnold conceived the plan of capturing Quebec by means of an army sent through the woods of Maine by way of the Kennebec and Chaudiere rivers route that had been surveyed in 1760 by Lieut. John Montresor. It is said the Montresor's journal fell into Arnold's hands and suggested to him the feasibility of this route through the Maine wilderness. At any rate, Washington was sufficiently impressed by the possibilities of Colonel Arnold's plan to permit him to organize and command the expedition of 1100 men which sailed from Newburyport on Sept. 19, 1775,

bound for Fort Western and the conquest of Canada. In view of the misfortunes that befell the expedition, through misinformation and accident, it is plain that it was conceived upon insufficient knowledge of the difficulties of the route and also was lacking in proper equipment. To be sure, two scouts, Dennis Getchell and Samuel Berry, had been sent out beforehand by General Washington to ascertain what obstacles the intended expedition would be likely to meet on the way to Quebec. Another report on the route might have been of much value to General Washington, had he but known of its existence, for some fifteen years before, Governor Pownall had written that he had had the Kennebec-Chaudiere route "particularly investigated by Ensign Howard, a Country Surveyor," who found it to be "impracticable to an Army that hath a Train of Artillery and heavy Baggage" but available for a scouting party or body of men lightly armed.

Arnold's fleet of transports reached the Kennebec safely and on Sept. 21, 1775, he left his flag ship, a schooner named the "Broad Bay", and was rowed up the river to Gardinerstown where he spent the next two days in hastening the movements of his men and supplies to Fort Western. Meanwhile a fleet of bateaux had been built at Gardinerstown under the direction of Major Colburn and much of the ill success of the expedition was due to



General Benedict Arnold

AFTER A DRAWING FROM LIFE BY DU SIMITIÈRE

Fort Western on the Kennebec

the faulty work and material in their construction. The exact proportions of these bateaux are not known at the present day but they were made of green pine boards which made them heavy and difficult to handle and soon many of them developed serious leaks so that they were abandoned. Even the canoe in which Colonel Arnold set out from Fort Western soon proved leaky and he changed for another at Vassalborough. The present Kennebec river type of flat-bottomed boat is high and sharp at both ends, is easily managed and difficult to overturn. Within the memory of old river men it has remained always the same type but probably some development has taken place since 1775.

On September 25th, Arnold dispatched from Fort Western, Captain Morgan and three companies of riflemen as an advance party and after that the troops departed rapidly until three days later when the last division embarked on its uncomfortable journey. Numerous diaries were kept by both officers and men during this expedition many of them little more than line-a-day jottings of events. Few recorded extended personal observations or commented at length on the country and the people they met. One of the best of these diaries is that kept by Doctor Isaac Senter, a surgeon from Pennsylvania, which was published in 1846. The items covering the period following his

arrival in the river until he reached Vassalborough are here given:—

“Saturday, Sept 23. Wind being unfavorable we were not able to arrive at Fort Western last evening. This morn I quitted the Broad Bay [Arnold's flag ship] and proceeded up the river by land, the distance being only five miles to Fort Western though most of the way was destitute of any road. Arrived at Fort Western at 10 o'clock in the morning. We now came to a rapid in the river beyond which our transports could not pass, nor could they get up as far as this. Most of them were left at Gardiner's Town, where the bateaux were built, and the troops disembarked from them into the bateaux except those who were obliged to take land carriage. The bateaux were made of green pine boards which made them somewhat heavy. Headquarters were at Esq. Howard's, an exceedingly hospitable, opulent, polite family.

“Sunday, Sept. 24. Early this morning was called to attend a wounded soldier, who was shot through the body last night by a malicious drunken fellow belonging to the army. The hemorrhage was great inwardly, which soon occasioned his death.

“Sept. 25. This morning search being made for the fellow who was imagined to be the murderer -- found and condemned by a court martial to hang . . .

“Tuesday 26. This morning at ten left Fort Western in company with Lieut-Col. Greene. Mr Burr and several other gentlemen intrusted to my care. Lodged within five miles of Fort Halifax at Mr Hobby's.

“Wednesday 27. Quit our lodgings at 10 in the morn and arrived

What Happened at Fort Western

at Fort Halifax at 12. Some few inhabitants, though not many, are settled round this place. Was invited by Mr Howard, an inhabitant who lived up a small river which emptied into the Kennebec, close to the fort, and went up the little river called Sabasticuck, distance from the fort four miles.

"Thursday 28. This morning I returned to the fort from my lodgings up the little river, but finding the rear of the army not yet arrived I betook myself to my last nights lodgings where I fared exceedingly well.

"Friday 29. During all this time the batteaux were coming up and going over the falls. The rapid water is a distance of about half a mile, past which everything was carried by hand. By this time several of our batteaux began to leak profusely, made of green wood and that in the most slight manner.

"Saturday 30. Ere this my batteau had arrived at the fort in such a shattered condition that I was obliged to purchase another, or not proceed by water without destroying my medicines, stores, etc. I purchased a more portable well built one, seasoned, etc. for which I gave four dollars . . . and engaged Mr Howard's team, put my bark, freight, etc. on board his cart and carried it from his house over across the land to Kennebec."

Doctor Senter camped seven miles above Fort Halifax where he remained until Oct. 3d when he received a call to go and visit a sick soldier whom he found "at one Mr Howard's, where were numbers of the army," three miles below the falls called Wassarumskeig.

The incident of the murder of the soldier is mentioned in every diary and must have made a deep impression on the minds of the men about to venture into the almost pathless wilderness. Some of the soldiers had been quartered at the house of Daniel Savage, below Esquire Howard's "Great House", when one of them, James McCormick, who was intoxicated and quarrelsome, was turned out of the house but soon returned and discharged his gun at random and shot a soldier, Reuben Bishop. McCormick was tried by court martial and condemned to be hanged but Colonel Arnold respited the sentence and sent the man to Boston to await Washington's pleasure, at the time expressing the hope "that he may be found a proper object of mercy."

McCormick died in jail at Cambridge while awaiting disposition of his case. He is said to have been "very simple and ignorant." The soldier who was murdered was buried just outside the Fort burying ground near the east end of the present Kennebec bridge. Years afterwards the remains were exhumed and reburied in the Fort burying ground. Willow street now passes over the site of his grave. Capt. Simeon Thayer of Providence, R. I. in his journal of the expedition gives this account of the circumstances of the murder:—

"Sept. 23. Proceeded to Fort Western. This place was formerly pretty strong; was built against the

Fort Western on the Kennebec

French and Indians, but at present of no great consequence. It has two large and two small block houses.

"Sept 24. Occupied in getting our men and provisions up from Gardiner's Town. After Capt. Topham [of Newport, R. I.] and myself went to bed in a neighbor's house, some dispute arose in the house between some of our soldiers on which we were requested to get up and appease them. I got out of Bed, and ordered them to lie down and be at rest; and on going to the door, I observed the flash of the priming of a gun and called to Capt. Topham who arose likewise and went to the door, was fired at, but was miss'd, on which he drew back and I with Topham went to bed, but the fellow who had fully determined murder in his heart, came again to the door and lifted the latch, and fired into the room, and killed a man lying by the fireside."

Caleb Haskell records in his diary that on the 26th "a gallows was erected, the murderer brought out and sat upon it about half an hour, then was taken down to be sent back to Cambridge to have another trial. One man whipped and drummed out for stealing." Another account states that the murderer was conducted "with a Halter about his neck, and placed on the stage under the gallows." The account written by Abner Stocking, a soldier from Chatham, Conn., is more circumstantial:—

"While remaining at this place I was called to witness a scene which to me was awful and very affecting, the more so I presume, as it was the first of the kind I ever beheld. A

civil, well behaved and much beloved young man, belonging to Captain William's Company, was shot. He lived about twelve hours, and died in great horror and agony of mind at the thought of going into eternity and appearing before his God and Judge. He was from the north parish of New London, and had a wife and four children.

"The supposed murderer was James McCormick. The circumstances of his being out all night, and his guilty looks and actions were pretty convincing proof against him. He was tried by a court martial and sentenced to be hanged until dead, his gallows erected and all things prepared for his execution. . . . He would not confess himself guilty of intentionally murdering the young man; but that he intended to have killed his Captain with whom he had the night before a violent quarrel. He was brought to the gallows, a prayer made, and the time for his execution almost arrived, when Colonel Arnold thought best to relieve him and send him to General Washington."

Colonel Arnold and some of the officers were entertained by Esquire Howard at the "Great House" and other officers were lodged at the Fort where they were "exceedingly well entertained," as Major Return Jonathan Meigs recorded in his journal. Some of the soldiers found shelter in the few available houses but the larger number of the men made for themselves rude shelters or camped on the ground. Ephraim Squier, a Connecticut soldier, wrote that on the 22nd he spent the night at Nan Cross', a private house

What Happened at Fort Western

about seven miles below Fort Western. The next day he reached the Fort and "there made us a Board Camp, wood cut very handy." Caleb Haskell wrote that. "we encamped on the ground, several of the companies have no tents here. We are very uncomfortable, it being very rainy and cold and nothing to cover us." Captain Henry Dearborn in his diary makes mention of the Fort which he describes as follows:

"Sept 24th. We lay at Fort Western preparing for our march. Fort Western stands on the East side of the River and consists of two Block Houses and a Large House 100 Feet Long which are Inclos'd only with Picquets. This House is now the property of one Howard Esqr where we were well entertained."

Accompanying Colonel Arnold's expedition were a number of gentlemen volunteers, all young men, one of whom, Aaron Burr, afterwards became Vice-President of the United States. He was the son of Rev. Aaron Burr, President of the College at Princeton, N. J. and grandson of Rev. Jonathan Edwards, the greatest of the American theologians, who also became President of Princeton College. Young Burr possessed the keen intellect of his ancestral line but completely lacked its austere morality. He was small in person but was endowed with a fascination of manner and a seductiveness of speech that through life made him well-nigh irresistible with

women. When he reached the Kennebec he was nineteen years old and his first landing was at Swan Island where he met an Indian girl, Jacataqua, who was descended from the sachems of an Abenaki tribe long located on the river. She also had a French ancestor and professed the Roman Catholic faith. Attracted by Burr she followed him to Fort Western, where she was well known, and then attached herself to the expedition and during the long journey through the woods was of the greatest assistance in hunting game and supplying to the sick soldiers simple Indian remedies. Tradition preserves the story that through Burr's chance acquaintance with a British officer the Indian girl at last was sheltered at a convent in Quebec where she gave birth to a daughter—Burr's child. Jacataqua afterwards found her way to New York and at last drowned herself at Hell Gate in the North River.

In 1779, Fort Western was suddenly visited by survivors from the ill-managed expedition sent out by Massachusetts to dislodge a British force at Castine. Paul Revere was in command of the artillery attached to the expedition and with other officers and stragglers was entertained at the Fort while on the way back to Boston.

Aside from these two visitations the Fort saw little of the activities of the Revolution. Capt. James Howard was the head of the local Committee of Safety chosen in the



A. Burr

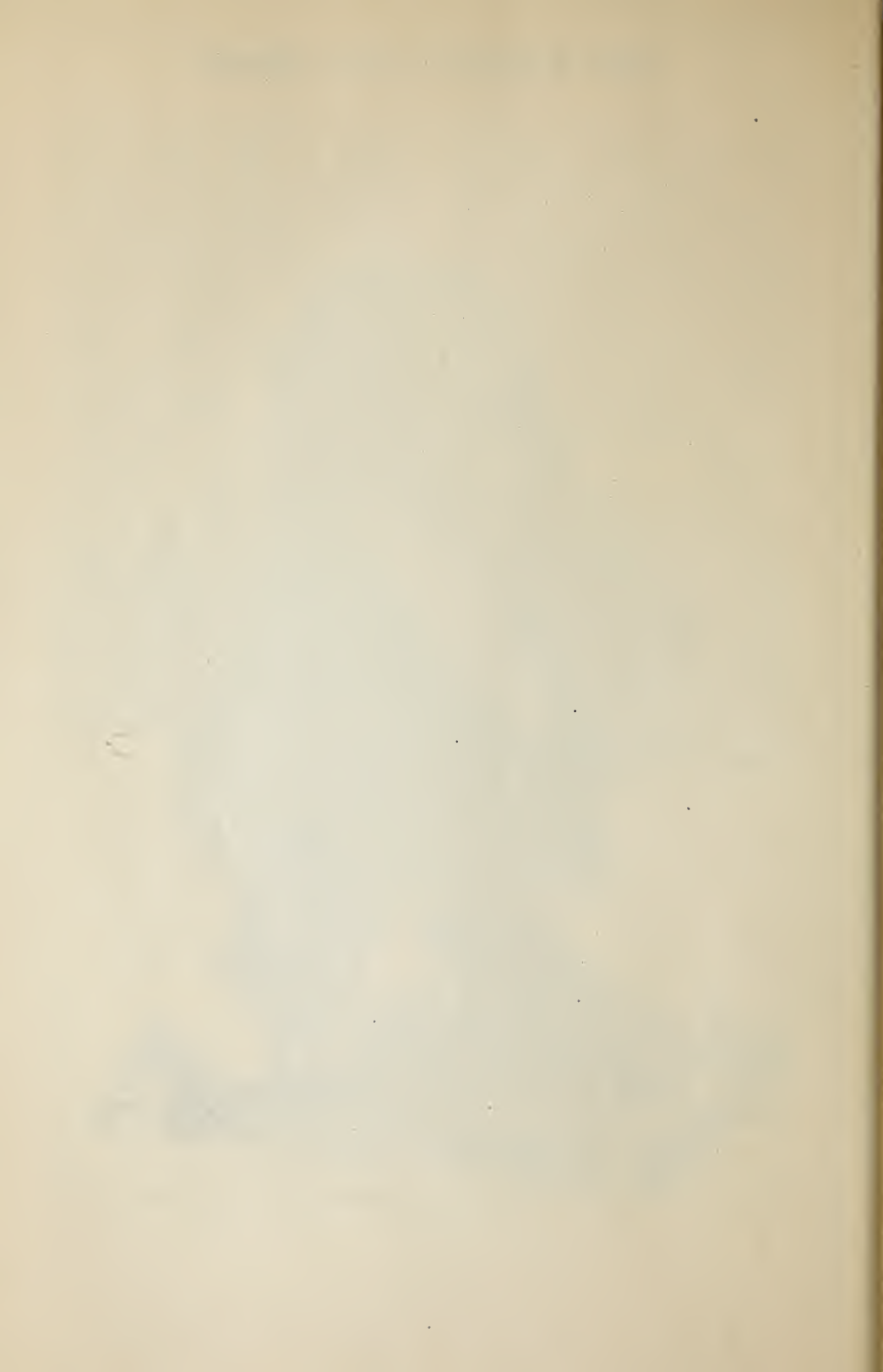
What Happened at Fort Western

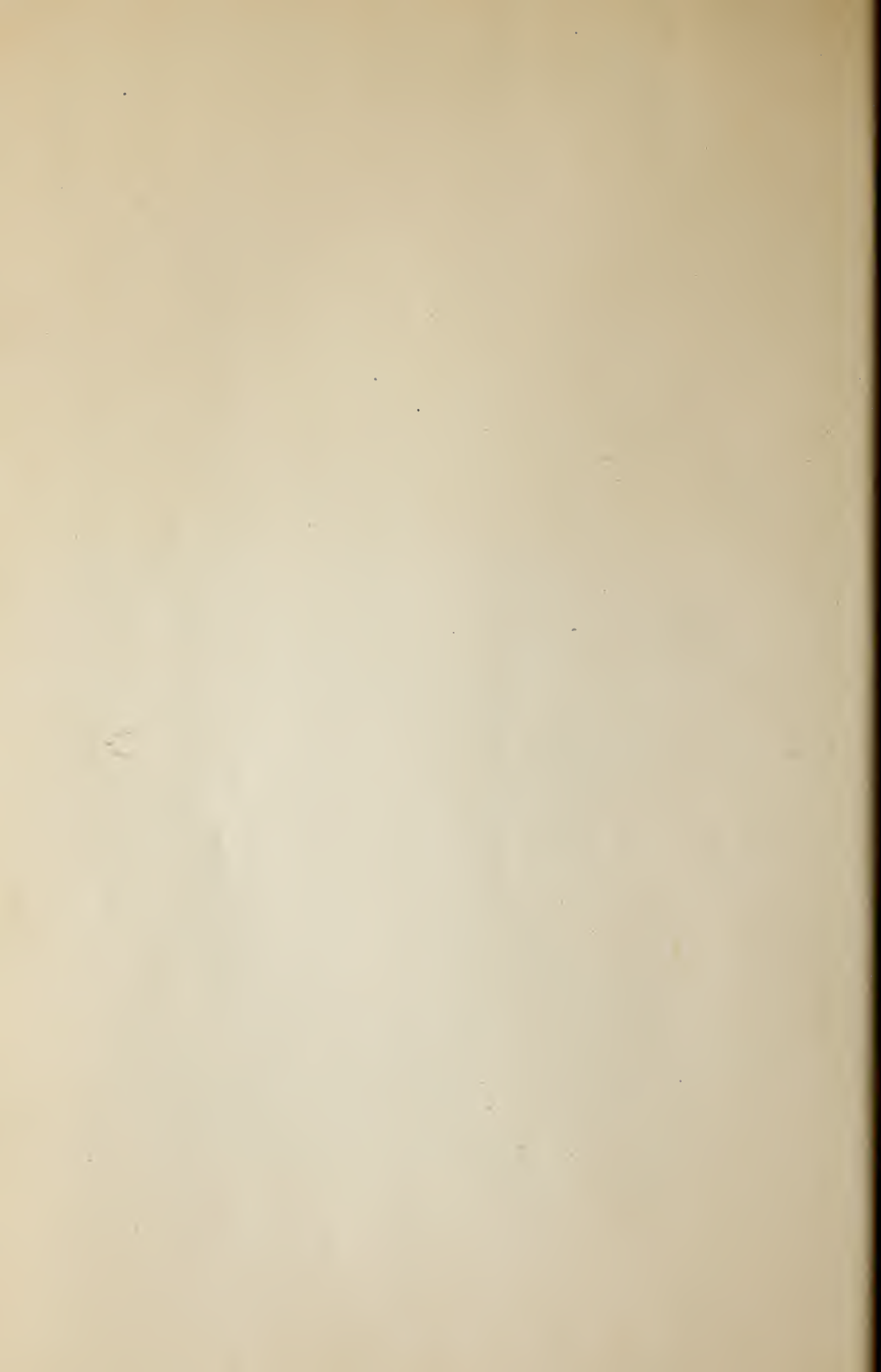
spring of 1775 and his sons Samuel and William both saw active service during the war and their descendants continued to live in the old Fort until it passed out of the family name and was divided up and occupied as a tenement house. Surrounded by a number of other decrepit buildings in time it became neglected and not only was it a refuge for the illegal sale of liquor but a fire risk and an unsavory menace to the city.

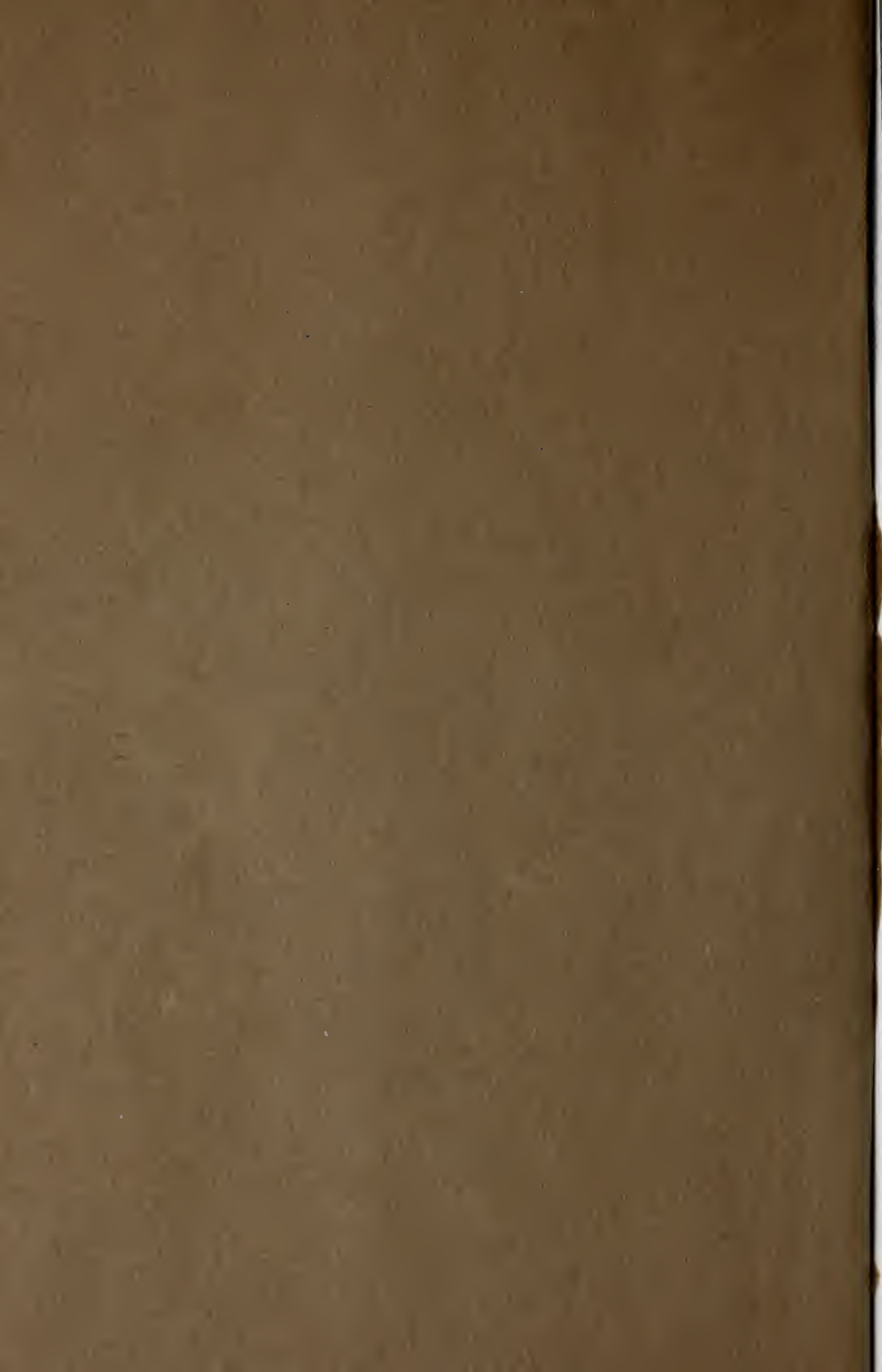
In 1919, Mr. Guy P. Gannett of Augusta, a descendant of the Howards, determined to rescue the historic Fort from destruction and after restoration to present it to the city of Augusta as a memorial to his mother, Mrs. Sadie Hill Gannett. After some litigation this was effected late in 1921 when the Fort and surrounding land was acquired by right of eminent domain, the land

damages and legal costs having been assumed by Mr. Gannett. The building has since been restored along lines showing its occupancy at different periods; reproductions of the old-time block houses have been erected and the whole surrounded by a palisade suggesting the early defence against Indian attack. This work was done under the direction of Mr. William Howard Gannett, the father of Mr. Guy P. Gannett, who spared no pains or expense in securing a restoration correct in all possible details and who also searched far and near for the interesting and valuable collection of relics and historical furnishings that is accumulating in the Fort to visualize to the present and coming generations the home life and occupations of the hardy settlers in the valley of the Kennebec











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